

THE FAMILY
New Year's GIFT:
OR, A
PRESENT
FOR A
SON or a DAUGHTER;

Consisting of
DISCOURSES on the Duties of
Parents to Children, Husbands to
Wives, Masters to Servants; and Chil-
dren to Parents, Wives to Husbands,
Servants to Masters.

WITH
PRAYERS proper for Each Discourse.

By an EMINENT DIVINE lately deceased.

L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.



*Learned Bishop very justly observed,
' That there is nothing wherein
' the Truth and Power of Godliness,
' and the Life of Religion is more
' concerned, than in a conscientious
' Performance of relative Duties.'*

This was also the Sentiment of that judicious accurate Author, Bishop Fleetwood, the Substance of whose excellent Discourses on such useful Subjects, is concisely reduced, and yet fully represented in the following Essay. ' The Design of Christianity, (says the good Prelate) is to make People happy in this World, as well as in another. And the right way it takes to do this, is to make them good and virtuous whilst they live, by the Discharge of all the Relations they stand in to each other, whether natural, civil, or contracted. That is, by performing their Duty to their Neighbour.—Therefore let none think it indifferent, whether they well or ill discharge the Duties of their several Relations; for was Religion divided into Parts, the Duties we owe to one another would make five of six; and for which Heaven is to reward our good Performance, and Hell to punish the Neglect thereof.'

The Intent of this Epitome is to convey in an easy, cheap Way to Mankind, the fine Thoughts and clear Reasoning of one, who was peculiarly distinguished for excelling in both; on Subjects wherein every Individual is in some respect concerned. Whoever reads and compares this Abstract with the Original, will find it to comprize every material Argument, Reasoning, and Observation contained in the Bishop's larger Treatise.
If

P R E F A C E.

If this is true, more need not be urged to recommend it; especially as no one has attempted to explain and enforce, such necessary Duties, in a Method so short and comprehensive, as is here done at a very small Price.

The Nature and Design of Abridgments being well known and universally esteemed, it would be impertinent, and also trespassing on the Reader's Patience, to enlarge on the great Usefulness and Advantages thereof, considered either as an Aid to the Memory, or an Ease to the Pocket; nor is the exactest Performance any just Exception against it. And therefore, tho' a learned Divine applied the following Character to an eminent Bishop,

—— His Judgment such,

As not to say too little, or too much.

Yet for the Benefit of Mankind, and in hopes to propogate the Knowledge and Truths of Christianity, he thought it necessary and commendable to bestow his Labour and Time in reducing to a small Bulk, that excellent Prelate's Exposition on the Creed. 'A Performance, than which, (says the Doctor) 'the Christian World has never seen any thing 'more accomplished, since the divine Truths of 'Scripture have been guarded, by the Succours of 'human Learning.' Another ingenious Author has since also done the same. And if an Abridgment of so celebrated a Work was by two learned Divines judged laudable in itself, and beneficial to Religion; it may be hoped an Attempt of a similar Nature, in epitomizing a no less admirable and judicious Treatise of another Right Reverend, and truly pious Prelate, will not be culpable, but rather meet with a favourable Reception.

J. N.



DISCOURSE I.

DUTY of CHILDREN to PARENTS.

EXOD. XX. 12.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.



INTENDING to treat of the Duties we owe to one another, in the several Relations wherein we stand, it is proper to begin with that, which, in Nature, Reason, and God's Appointment, is first to be practised; I mean, the Duty of Children to their Parents, expressed in the Words of the Text, *Honour thy Father*. I shall *First* shew, what is meant by honouring our Parents. *Secondly*, evince the Reasons, why we ought to honour them. And *Thirdly*, consider the Reward here promised, *that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

The Word *Honour* is to be taken in several Senses.

B

To

To honour God is one Thing, to honour the King another, to honour our Superiors a third, and to honour our Equals or Inferiors, is very different from either : So that the Person to be honoured, must determine its Meaning and Extent. The Intent of this Commandment is to secure the Duty of Children to Parents, whose several Duties, in all particular Instances, are comprehended in the Word Honour. To *honour our Father and Mother* then, is to *love, respect, and obey* them, to *succour and support* them, all we can. But tho' we are commanded to love our Parents, yet, properly speaking, it is not in our Power, whatever we may think, to love or hate, hope or fear, when, what, and whom we will ; but according as the Thing, or Person appears lovely and desirable ; so that much depends on the Parents Management, to procure that sincere Love and Affection from their Children, which they expect and desire : And Children also should take such Methods, as will most probably secure and encrease their natural Affections to their Parents, and carefully avoid whatever may diminish it. To love our Parents is so natural, fit, and reasonable, that few have the Confidence to own the Want of it, tho' perhaps they know and grieve, that they have it not. And this Respect, Obedience, and Support, which we certainly owe to them, ought to be improved and nourished, by all the Arguments we can find. How far the Consideration, that Parents, under God, are the Authors and Originals of our Life and Being, will contribute to excite this Affection, is not easy to determine. The Ancients indeed, thought it would, and there-

therefore insisted much on it. They supposed *Being* itself was a great Blessing; but if duly considered, that is no farther beneficial, than as it makes us capable of *receiving* Good; for if we are in Misery, our *Being* occasions whatever Evil we suffer, and then it cannot be good to us. If God should create us with a Design to have us miserable, we could not *thank*, much less *love* him, for giving us *Being*: nay, should he make us to be perfectly happy in this Life, and to be miserable hereafter, yet we could neither truly love, nor thank him, for creating us. The Certainty of being miserable by his Appointment, at any time, must make him dreadfully odious to our Mind. When therefore we thank God for our *Creation*, it is for making us capable of being happy, both here and hereafter; and for giving us the good Things of this World, that is, Capacities and Powers to acquire and enjoy them, and to attain everlasting Happiness in the Life to come. It is always for something *good*, past, present, or promised for the future, that we thank God; this is the sole Foundation of all Love, and on which it terminates. And where we do not experience some Good, or have it in prospect, it is impossible to love; and therefore the Love that Children owe their Parents, on account of receiving from them Life and Being, is only so far due, as they are thereby capable of enjoying *other* Good.

It is true, that Parents giving Life and Being to their Children, excites a new and singular Affection to them, properly *parental*; for this we see in the Creatures, that are incapable of Considera-

tion: But then doubtless, this parental, natural, and irresistible Affection, is greatly heightened and improved in reasonable Creatures, by the Hopes of receiving some Comfort, Credit, or Advantage from their Children. So that tho' the parental Love is the most disinterested of any, yet it is really selfish at the bottom; by proposing some Pleasure and Satisfaction, Honour and Credit, or other Advantage from the Objects of its Love. But notwithstanding this, the singular and inexpressible Affection of Parents to their Children, deserves to be repaid with all possible Love, because the parental Love is hourly displaying and exerting itself, in all the beneficial Acts of Kindness within its Power. It supplies the Wants of helpless Infancy, secures them from all the Hazards of heedless Childhood, of giddy and unthinking Youth. It shapes the Body, preserves it strait and upright, and to do this, it bears with many Troubles and incommodious Hardships. It is this Affection that informs the Mind, regulates the Manners, improves the Reason, exercises the Memory, instructs them to argue and understand little Affairs, in order to fit and prepare them for greater. It is this, that brings them first to God in Baptism, and after keeps them in the Ways of Goodness and Religion, by instilling wise and virtuous Principles, by constantly reminding them of their several Duties, by encouraging them in Good, with Kindness, Favours, and Rewards; and by reprovng, threatening, and correcting them, when acting any thing that tends to Evil.

These,

These, and innumerable other; are the Methods that Parents take, to make their Children happy; besides those many endless Labours, Watchings, and Solitudes, that consume their whole Life, to supply them with Riches and the good Things of this World. So that whatever Benefits can be the Foundation of Children's Love, is abundantly afforded by the Care and Tenderness of Parents. And tho' Parents by natural Instinct and Affection, by Principles of Love and Tenderness, implanted in their Hearts by God, are to take this Care of Children; (a Duty no less necessary, than easy, pleasant, and delightful to a Parent) yet is the Children's Love nevertheless due, in return for the parental one, because that Love is founded on Benefits received, or hoped for: And therefore Children are obliged to have such Benefits in remembrance, in order to excite them to love their Parents, who were not only the Authors of their Being, but also under God, of their Welfare and present Happiness. And tho' the Parents Endeavours to promote their Children's Happiness should not succeed, as often happens, yet since that did not proceed from want of Love and Care, the Obligation on the Child is still the same. I make the Sense of Benefits received, or intended, and hoped for, the Foundation of filial Love, not only because it is so in Truth, as being the Foundation of all Love, the true Cement of all Relations, what really obliges to all Duties, and makes them such, antecedently to all Commands either of God or Man; but also for the Parents sake, that they knowing on what Bottom such Love is truly built, and expecting,

desiring, and approving nothing more, than their Children's Love, may take the greater Care to raise and secure this Love, by laying such a Foundation for it, as cannot easily miscarry. For tho' the Fondness of Parents will please and gain the Love of their Children, while childish, wanton, and unthinking; yet, when they put away childish Things, they will require some other Foundation to build their Affection on. The Love that was built on their Play-things will vanish, and which should be succeeded by something more solid and durable; and that must be a wise, virtuous, religious Education, and such a reasonable, decent Provision of Things temporal, that the older Children grow, the longer they live, and the more they advance in Reason and Understanding; still the greater Reason, the juster Cause may they have to love their Parents, from their so sensibly feeling the advantageous Effects of their Parents Care. Thus may Parents secure their Children's Love, by the Obligations they lay on them; and Children, when they would excite an inward Affection to their Parents, should remember the many *Benefits* they have received from them, as well as their *Being*.

Another Duty Children owe their Parents, is *Respect*, that is, all external Honour and Civility. Their Behaviour should be submissive and dutiful, such as becomes Inferiors to their Superiors. It is an Offence against natural Decency to see Children claim an Equality with their Parents; to answer them rudely and irreverently; or by any Looks, Words, or Actions, to be wanting in Respect towards them. They are to be full

full of Kindness, Good-nature, and Civility ; to say Things honourable of them, not to search too narrowly into their Infirmities and Failings, and as much as possible to extenuate and conceal them from others ; it being against Reason and natural Decency, for a Child to reproach his Parents with either Vices or Infirmities, or tell them to others, tho' it may be true ; unless performed with great Concern and Tenderneſs, Grief and Pity ; and even this, to ſuch only, as will make no ill uſe thereof. But when this is done, with Contempt or Pleaſure in relating it, ſuch an Impiety ought to be abhorred by all Men. Nor is there a ſurer Sign of a very bad Diſpoſition in Children, than when they are wanting in any kind of Reverence to their Parents ; ſuch ſeldom making faithful Subjects, or good Relations of any Sort.

And as it is for the moſt part in the Parents Power to have Children well diſcharge their Duty, ſo ſhould it be their great Care and Concern. They muſt be careful how they live and behave in their Children's ſight, and what Examples they ſet them ; for, if by too much Familiarity, by a light and indiſcreet Carriage towards them or others, they make themſelves mean and contemptible in their Children's Eyes, it will be in vain to expect that Reverence and Reſpect, which is due to ſuch a Relation. The Foundation of Reſpect is ſome ſuppoſed Excellence, and, in this caſe, ſome kind of Superiority ; but if Parents admit their Children to an Equality, and make them privy to their Indiſcretions, Follies and Miſcarriages, they thereby invite Contempt, and remove

the very Foundation and Support of all Respect and Honour. Children should not be Witnesses of any thing indecently said or done by Parents. All domestic Differences, idle and unseemly Quarrels and Debates, every simple unkind Word and Action, that too often pass between Parents, should be hid and concealed from Children; for they observe and treasure up these Follies, and (secretly at least) side with the one, and learn to hate or despise the other, and many times entertain a mean Opinion of both, which undermines all manner of Esteem and dutiful Observance: Nay, sometimes one Parent will wickedly support Children to condemn and slight the other; and to vent their Rage on one another, will make their Children miserable by Disobedience. This is a sad Case indeed. But *neither* Parent has Authority to absolve Children of their Duty to the *other*. For tho' one of them should be of evil Fame, and bad Example, yet is *Respect* and all exterior Honour to be paid them; even when they can be neither loved, obeyed, or imitated by the Children. This Part of honouring Parents is ever in the Children's Power, and ought always to be done. For tho' sometimes Children may not be able to obey the several opposite Commands of their Parents, yet it can never so happen, but that they may pay Respect and Honour to both, of which they must never fail, because this can be no Injury to either Parent. But should one Parent be so unreasonable as to require a Child to affront or slight the other, the Child would be safe in a respectful Disobedience and Refusal; because no Parent has a Right to take away another's

Disc. I. *to Parents.*

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ther's Right, each of them having equal Right to the Respect and Honour of their Children. And 'tis a wicked Thing for any Parent to command, require, encourage, or be pleased with, any rude, ill-natured, undutiful Behaviour of Children to either Parent, on any Provocation whatever. Children are the Pledges of mutual Love, and the Cement of Affection; Nature requires them to make up Differences, but when they occasion or widen a Breach, they act unnaturally.

It is impossible to propose Rules of Honour and Respect, that can oblige all People alike; the common Usage and Custom of a Place are the best Standard and Measure of every one's Duty herein. Some Qualities and Conditions demand a peculiar Respect, not proper to be used by others. Mean and ordinary People have generally less Respect from their Children, than those of better Quality, which should not be; for the poorest Parents are intitled to Honour and Respect from their Children, as well as the rich; and both might have it, did they look after, and require it in due time. It would be a great Advantage to themselves and Children, to bring them up, tho' never so mean, in a respectful Awe, and dutiful Regard to their Parents; they might then expect to reap more Comfort from their Children, than they commonly do. The keeping Children at a distance must be done with Caution and Discretion; it naturally tends to preserve Respect and Honour, and is therefore generally best to be observed. But the different Circumstances of Parents, the various Tempers and Dispositions of Children make great Altera-

tion, and ought to be considered. Some are so modest, so discreetly educated and behaved, that the greatest Liberty does them no Harm; they still preserve a lively Sense of Respect, and never exceed their Bounds, but decently demean themselves in the Midst of Favour and Indulgence. Such would be hurt by great Restraint and Awe, and the Parent would lose much Comfort and innocent Delight by keeping them at too great Distance. Others grow wanton, insolent and headstrong on the least Indulgence, and know not how to behave under Liberty and Kindness. This is the Humour of most, and to them Liberty is hurtful; for these without Restraint and Awe would be miserable. The Difference of Age, as well as Temper, is also to be considered; it would be weak to expect the same Regard from the Elder, as the Younger. The Elder must be no more wanting in Respect, than the Younger, but then it should be what is proper and becoming. No Age, Quality or Condition can exempt Children from paying Honour and Respect to their Parents; but each may make some Alteration in expressing that Respect. This Honour and respectful Carriage of Children to Parents, is not only decent and becoming, but exceeding useful to public Society. Let Children then consider the Reasonableness, Decency and Necessity of it, and the Obligations they lie under from God's Command; and Parents having great Power, and many advantageous Opportunities of preserving in their Children a true Sense of this their Duty, they should also take care not to omit doing it, both for their own and Children's sake. And, would they

they *punish*, rather than *grieve*, for any disrespectful Behaviour of their Children, they would certainly have less cause to grieve or complain.

And this would make way for a more ready and better *Obedience* to their Commands, and which is comprized in this Commandment of honouring our Parents; for without *Obedience*, Respect and Honour would be meer Formality and Mockery. Whilst Children want Understanding to direct their Choice and Will, they should obey their Parents Will in all Things: The Reason of this Children themselves perceive, when arrived to Years of Maturity. They will then confess, that their Parents Wisdom, Experience and Capacity were much greater than their own, and therefore more fit to rule and govern. There are few, that when young disputed and repined at their Parents Commands, but what have afterwards been convinced, they were truly wiser, better, and more reasonable to be complied with, than their own Wills and Humours, tho' they did not think so at the Time. And indeed, as Parents have lived longer to observe Things better, it is most likely they should best know, what Advice is most fit and proper for their Children; and tho' they may sometimes be mistaken, yet it is ever safest for Children to follow their Instructions and Commands; and all good People approve, and are more ready to pity and help such under any Misfortune, than those who are stubborn, self conceited and disobedient. As therefore there is the greatest Reason to presume, that Parents Advice and Commands are the wisest and most reasonable; so there is all possible Certainty

tainty of their good Intention and Design: For
 who should intend the Benefit of Children so
 much as Parents, who seem to live for no other
 End and Purpose, than to do them good? They
 have no other Aim than their Advantage; all
 their Care, Study and Thoughts are fixed on
 them; they suffer many and great Inconveni-
 encies for their Sake; often live penuriously and
 hardly, that their Children may enjoy Ease and
 Pleasure; and who should suspect the Counsels
 and Commands of such, as wanting of Love and
 Kindness? No one can possibly be so well assured
 of another's Kindness and Good-will, as of his
 Parents, and therefore no one's Commands ought
 to be entertained with a better Opinion, and
 which would greatly promote Obedience to them.
 Young Persons should thus consider with them-
 selves, ' The Advice and Commands of Parents
 ' come from Persons who have lived long in the
 ' World, and had Experience; who have them-
 ' selves had Parents, and either followed their
 ' Advice, or repented of not doing it. Indeed,
 ' the Duties enjoined may be unacceptable, and
 ' such as we do not like, but we have often been
 ' mistaken, and ought not to think ourselves
 ' wiser than they. We have not had their
 ' Experience; and that Wisdom, Knowledge
 ' and Experience, which generally attend Old-
 ' age, make *such* fit Counsellors; so that there
 ' is the greatest Reason to think them wiser than
 ' we. And as for their Love and Affection, there
 ' is no one so likely as they to wish us well, or
 ' to be grieved at our Misfortunes. There is a
 ' great Difference to be perceived, between the
 Mind

‘ Mind and Concern, with which our Parents
‘ speak, and other People, tho’ good Friends.
‘ They speak with a lively Sense and Feeling, with
‘ Force and Affection, in great Earnest and from
‘ the Bottom of the Heart, as if they were to en-
‘ dure the Evils they warn us to avoid, and suffer
‘ the Miseries we shall undergo, if we follow not
‘ their Counsels ; so that they appear exceedingly
‘ interested in our Behalf. Nor can they gain any
‘ Advantage by our complying with them, more
‘ than Content and Satisfaction ; for all they have
‘ already is ours in design, and what they are still
‘ getting is for us. All this evidently proves, that
‘ what they say to us, and the Commands they
‘ lay on us, proceed from the truest, most sincere,
‘ disinterested Affection in the World. When
‘ we miscarry, they are afflicted and undone.
‘ Let *them* be never so wise, rich, or honourable,
‘ *our* Folly, Sin and Disobedience will make them
‘ miserable ; for, tho’ they lose thereby neither
‘ their Understanding, Wealth, nor Places, yet,
‘ such is their Concern for us, that they are not
‘ happy with all these Things, unless we make
‘ them so, by being dutiful and obedient, good
‘ and virtuous. And can we then think, that
‘ the Advice and Commands of our Parents are
‘ not the best, the most kindly intended, and
‘ fittest for our Practice and Compliance ? ’

None of these Considerations are above the Capacity and Understanding of young Persons, when capable to receive and obey Commands. There is nothing so plain and easy as to consider, that Parents love their Children dearly and without Design, are older, wiser, and more experienced

enced than themselves, and therefore the fittest to command, and to be obeyed. And tho' the Commands of Parents do often cross the Children's Desires, and hinder them from pursuing their Pleasures ; yet it is not because Parents envy their Pleasures, or deny them Satisfaction, only to shew their Power and Authority ; but that the Prosecution of their Desires, in these forbidden Instances, is criminal, and would be hurtful to them, tho' Children may not see it. What they command, tends to the Children's Advantage, and what they forbid, is hurtful in itself or Consequences. And as Parents remember to have been hindred when young, from eating, drinking, and doing, what they then liked and desired, which, they are now satisfied proceeded from no Unkindness, but turned, as was intended, to their Benefit ; so might Children reflect and consider, that the commanding them Things for the present uneasy, and forbidding them others that are desirable, may be full as reasonable and fit to be complied with, since, in a little time, they will be equally satisfied with the Care and Wisdom of their Parents. This young People are capable of considering, and ought to improve it. Let them enquire of their Neighbours and Acquaintance that are grown up, and see how many will tell them it is better, safer and wiser, to follow their own Humours, than the Advice of their Parents ; and when they find, as they must, all to agree, that notwithstanding the present Desires, and Uneasiness of complying with the Commands of Parents, yet it is better so to do ; that they who have obeyed, are very much satisfied

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fied, and they who have not, are grieved, troubled, and wish they had: Then they cannot but conclude, that, how unacceptable soever some Commands of Parents may be for the present, yet it is better to yield to them, than indulge their own Humours.

These are some of the Grounds and Principles, on which the Obligation of Children to comply with, and obey their Parents Commands, is built and depends. There are others, but I rather insist on these, because they are such as young Persons themselves, who are principally concerned, may see the Reason of, and have Capacity and Parts to consider, that so they may not pay a blind and implicit Obedience. And these are also the Reasons, why these Children should themselves, when they come to be Parents, exact and require Obedience from their Children; this all are naturally led to expect. Where is the Parent, that does not think it reasonable his Children should obey him, even against their Inclinations? and should not prefer *his* Wisdom and Experience to their own Will and Understanding? And trust to *his* Affection, Love and Favour, rather than pursue their own Humours? And for the same Reason that any one expects Obedience from his Children, ought he to obey his Parents. Children and young Persons cannot but observe, that Parents universally exact Obedience from their Children, and therefore should suppose, that they shall do so too, when they come to be Parents, and may certainly conclude, that there must be good Reason for a Practice, which all Nations of the World agree and center in.

But

But lest these Reasons should not prevail, God makes it a Command, and bids us *honour our Father and Mother*; so that he who is disobedient, offends against Command as well as Reason; against God as well as Man: And to shew us how fit it is to comply with and obey our Parents, God calls himself, throughout the holy Scriptures, our *Father*, and from that Title and Relation requires our Obedience. Let therefore stubborn, headstrong, disobedient and rebellious Children think on these Things; let them consider all the Ties and Obligations they are under to be obedient to their Parents; the Reasonableness, Pleasure and Security of being so; the Approbation of all good People, and the Blessing of God that attends it: And on the other hand, the Grief and Trouble of Mind; the Sorrow and Repentance at Home; the Shame and Infamy from Abroad, and the Displeasure of Almighty God, that are the Consequences of being disobedient to Parents. They should think on these Things, and whatever else may tend to forward and promote the Performance of their Duty.

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DISCOURSE II.

DUTY of CHILDREN to PARENTS.

EXOD. XX. 12.

*Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy
Days may be long in the Land, which the
Lord thy God giveth thee.*



I S-

N my last Discourse I shewed, that by *honouring Father and Mother* is meant to love, respect, obey, and relieve them under any Necessity; I also urged several Motives to oblige Children to pay such their Duty to Parents, and to excite Parents to secure their Children's Duty, by all possible Ways and Methods, as well for their Children's sake, as their own Comfort. But because there are some Cases, in which Children plead Exemption from this Rule of obeying their Parents Commands, and defend their transgressing this Law, it may be of use to consider, in what Particulars they are obliged to obey, without Reserve, and when

when not ; that the Duty of Children, and the just Authority of Parents may be both secured.

And first, it is certain, that all Commands of God must be obeyed before those of Parents ; whenever they interfere, our Duty to God is undoubtedly to be preferred. The Counsels or Commands of Parents must never sway Children so far, as to make them do what God forbids, or neglect what he commands ; because the Authority of God is first and greatest, with which nothing should stand in competition. But then the Command of God must be plain and evident, not doubtful and disputable ; full as clear as the Command of obeying Parents. In wicked and forbidden Instances, we are not to be led by their Example, Counsels or Commands ; but must then prefer our Duty and Obedience to God before all other Considerations. Thus, if Parents should command their Children to lye, steal, or do any Violence and Injustice, the Children must, with Respect, refuse ; for they are not at liberty to obey, having an antecedent Obligation by the Laws of God to Truth, Honesty and Justice. *Children, obey your Parents in all Things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord, Colos. iii. 20.* but then it is also said, *Ephes. vi. 1. Children, obey your Parents, in the Lord, for this is right ;* that is, according to God's Command and Will. For to obey them against God, can neither be right nor pleasing to him. And indeed all agree, that God is to be obeyed rather than Man. But tho' Children are at Liberty to disobey unjust Commands, yet they are not to undertake or do Things truly good and religious, without the Consent, or against

against their Parents Commands; I mean, unless the Thing is as certainly commanded by God, as we are commanded to obey our Parents. For instance, not to retire from the Business and Temptations of the World into a Cloyster, there to devote their whole Life to Prayer, Meditation, and the more immediate Service of God; for tho' Prayer and Meditation is certainly commanded by God, yet it is not lawful for Children to undertake this without the Consent, or against the Commands of their Parents; and the Pretences urged for such Disobedience are not strong enough to support it. To be devout, pray much, and meditate often, are very consistent with staying in the World, and obeying the Commands of Parents; but to disobey, grieve, and perhaps injure the Parents by such Retirement, are inconsistent both with Religion, and our Duty to God and our Parents. The ancient Christians were so tender of Children's Duty to Parents, that they would not admit any one to such Retirement, monastic Discipline, or Vow of Celibacy, without the Consent and Approbation of their Parents. This Case being now quite out of doors with us, I only mention it to shew, that tho' the Commands of Parents are never to be preferred to those of God, yet that such God's Commands must be very plain and certain; and that Children are not at liberty to withstand their Parents Commands, on *Pretence* of doing Things truly good and religious, and *obeying God rather than Man*. When they obey God rather than Man, the Command of God for it must appear clear and evident.

Second-

Secondly, The Laws of our Country are prior to the Commands of our Parents, if they command us any thing contrary to such Laws. The Reason is, because, the public Good being greater, and to be preferred to any Man's private Interest, this cannot be preserved, but by Obedience to such Laws as are made to secure it. If therefore a Father should command his Son to betray his Country, bear false Witness, or be instrumental to overthrow the Constitution of the Kingdom, he must not so honour his Father, as to obey any such Commands. In these two Cases, Children are exempted from obeying their Parents Commands. For when the Laws of God, or the Land interpose, we are to prefer them : but even then we are to disobey our Parents with great Modesty and Tenderneſs, not with Reproaches and scornful Refusals ; but to decline and avoid such Commands with all the gentle Arts and Methods of Submission. ' Even in a righteous Cause, says ' Salvian, the Language of the Children must be ' humble to the Parents ; ' and, should they not be able to obey, they must not therefore triumph and grow insolent. In Matters that are indifferent, Obedience is the sure Side, and yet great Regard is to be had to the Age, Customs of the Country, the Discretion of Children, and Circumstances of the Parents, before it can well be determined, what Obedience is due. This leads me to consider the Case of Children's marrying without, or against the Consent of Parents, and whether it be consistent with the Obedience required by the fifth Commandment.

It is not indeed said in Scripture, that Children shall

prior shall not marry without the Consent, or against
 com- the Will of their Parents, ; but it is expressly said,
 The that they shall *honour and obey them* ; and it will
 eater, be hard to reconcile marrying against consent with
 ereft, honouring the Parents; or marrying against Com-
 ce to mand with obeying them. And generally speak-
 refore ing, the Instances and Examples of Marriage in
 ay his Scripture are in favour of the Parents. The Stile
 mental was, *Such a one gave his Son, or Daughter, to*
 gdom, *such a one in Marriage* : This was the general
 y any Practice and Custom among the *Jews*. The same
 en are also prevailed amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*,
 ands. two of the wisest and most civilized People of all
 inter- the World. This Disposal of Children by Pa-
 n we rents is not only reasonable, and approved by
 odesty wife and good Men amongst them, and strength-
 scorn- ened by Custom immemorial, but it passed into
 Com- Laws and Statutes. They reckoned there was no
 ds of Marriage without Consent of Parents, for such
 e, say Children were accounted Bastards. The civil
 ust be Laws of *Christian* Emperors confirmed the Opi-
 y not nion of the Ancients ; and the Sentence of the
 umph Church, the *Canons*, and Judgment of the best
 ndiffe Writers, do all make the Consent of Parents
 great essential to the Contract. The Laws of our own
 of the Nation are indeed silent as to Consent of Parents,
 rcum- probably trusting to the Reason of the Thing, the
 be de Wisdom of all Ages, the Custom and Example
 e leads of almost all Nations ; but the Canons of our
 rrying Church positively require the Consent of Parents,
 s, and [Can. 101.] which shews her Opinion of this
 ce re Point.

But to all this it is reasonable to hear and con-
 sider what may be answered by the Children.
 Mar-

Marriage is certainly a State, on which the Happiness or Misery of Life greatly depends. To be perpetually confined to live with one we can't love and esteem, must be very uneasy. It requires many good Qualities to reconcile a constant Conversation with one Person, even where there is much Love and Affection; but without these, the best Qualities will never make a constant Conversation easy and delightful. Whence proceed those endless domestic Miseries, that plague and ruin so many Families, but from want of Love and Kindness in the Husband or Wife. From thence comes their Neglect and careless Management of Affairs at Home, their profuse and extravagant Expences Abroad. In Truth, the Evils that arise from the Want of conjugal Affection only are innumerable. This being so certain, what a fearful Hazard does either run, who marries without this Affection in themselves, and some good Assurance of it in the other? And since it is impossible for any to love, but with their own Affection, Parents ought seriously to consider, how they engage their Children to marry where there is not a hopeful Prospect, at least, of such Love; lest, endeavouring to make their Children happy, they are of all Creatures the most miserable, and irretrievably so. If young People should in any thing be left to their own Liberty, it seems to be in the Choice of those with whom they are to live and die; to be happy or miserable all their Days. And it is without Doubt in nothing so necessary as Marriage. There is great Reason then, that Parents should not use their Authority too far, in constraining their Children to marry,
not

not only where there is no visible Averſion, but alſo where there is great Probability of no good Agreement. And therefore, tho' foreign Nations diſpoſed of their Children in Marriage when, and as they pleaſed, yet their Example will not juſtify any Parent among us in doing the ſame, any farther than the Thing is fit. For Children with us are not obliged to do this, becauſe the *Jews*, *Greeks*, or *Romans* were; they had recourſe to Divorces, and their Laws and Cuſtoms allowed them greater Liberties than *Chriſtianity* does; and therefore their Examples ſhould not be too far urged in a *Chriſtian* Kingdom. But the Caſe of *Chriſtians* is quite otherwiſe; *Chriſt* hath obliged them to love each other, and no other; to be faithful and kind, without ſo much as the Hope of changing till Death. This makes it to be infinitely more the Intereſt and Concern of *Chriſtians* to marry none but whom they love, and intend to do ſo. And when Parents remember their Commands, in this Caſe, are of a laſting Nature, and from which their Children can never be freed, let what Evil ſoever happen to them, they ſhould be very cautious not to command againſt their Inclination. There is alſo a great Difference between Children's reſuſing, with Submiſſion and Reſpect, to obey their Parents, in marrying whom they do not love, and their marrying without the Conſent, or againſt the Commands of their Parents. The Diſobedience of the one is much more pardonable than the other, it being abundantly more eaſy for Perſons not to engage their Affections, than to ſettle and fix them where others pleaſe.

And

And to refuse marrying when commanded, is not so likely to do Injury, as to marry against Command ; and yet, in excuse of such Disobedience, Respect and Consideration must be had to People's Age and Condition.

The Customs of the World and Reason, consent in giving People more Liberty, the older they grow. They are not to be Masters of themselves whilst young, because their Reason, Understanding and Judgment are not perfect enough to consider, what is good or evil ; their Passions and Affections are strong and prevalent, and they have not Consideration sufficient to check and correct the Disorders of their Wills and Desires. And if these are the true Causes, why they ought to be subject to the Wills and Commands of Parents in their younger Years, it is but fit, that when Reason, Understanding and Judgment take place, their Restraint should be lessened, and they allowed full Liberty. Parents therefore ought to regard the Age and Wisdom of their Children, whose Disobedience in these Cases will be more or less excusable, as Age and Wisdom set them more at liberty ; and sometimes the Parents Neglect in taking due care to have them married, will excuse their marrying themselves. Indeed, there is so much to be said on both sides, as to Children's refusing to marry such as their Parents command them, or that marry against their Command, that it is neither safe nor true, to affirm, that Parents, in all Cases, have a Right to their Children's Obedience, or that Children are at liberty to dispose of themselves without their Parents. Most certain, Parents have a great Power,

Power, but they should use it tenderly and kindly ; and Children owe a great Duty, but they are not tied like Slaves in all Cases, and with Bonds that will last for ever. When they do not obey, they must do it with Unwillingness and great Reluctance ; it must be in Cases of great Moment and Concern, such as when represented to fair and equal, wise and understanding People, they may find themselves both pitied for their Trial, and approved for their Resolution.

The Sum of what has been said is, When the certain Laws of God, of the Land, and of our Superiors, lay their Commands or Prohibitions, then Parents should promote and forward the Obedience of their Children in such Instances. They are not to enjoin them any Thing prejudicial to the Obligations they are under, to God and their Country, or in Opposition to them ; and if they do, Children must go on steadily in their Duty to both, and *mistake* their Parents Orders with Submission, Respect and Tendernefs. And in Case of Marriages, Parents should take due Care to see their Children well disposed of, according to their Age, Quality, and Tempers, remembering they are then laying the Foundation of their Happiness or Misery ; and not to let the Consideration of Fortune and Estate preponderate and overweigh all Regard to Form and Favour, Birth and Education, Virtue and good Qualities, so as to neglect them. And when Parents have done this, Children are to obey as far as possibly they can ; little Objections and Niceties must yield to the mature Deliberations of Parents. It might no Doubt be wished, that Parents and Children could

approve of each other's Choice ; for then the Authority of Parents, and the Duty of Children would be both secured and reconciled. But if this happens otherwise, and the Parent proposes what the Child cannot assent to, and what wise, unconcerned Persons would blame, condemn, and reject ; then, if such Refusal is made with Decency and Humility on the Children's Part, it will be no sinful Disobedience : they may stand off with Innocence and Safety, and yet *honour* as they ought their *Father and Mother*. But if such Offer is made by Parents, as a wise and good Man, in the like Case and Circumstances would make, and no material Objection thereto ; I see no Reason, why Children should not obey their Parents in such Cases, and if they do not, they will be guilty of Sin, and ought to ask Forgiveness of God and their Parents.

And here it may be proper to consider the Authority of Mothers, and the Obedience that is due to them, during the Father's Life, and after his Decease. The Scriptures make no Difference herein ; *Honour thy Father and Mother ; He that smiteth his Father or Mother, shall surely be put to Death*, Exod, xxi 15. *He that curseth his Father or his Mother, shall surely be put to Death*, Ver. 17. *Ye shall fear every Man his Father and Mother*, Levit. xix. 3. *Cursed be he that setteth light by his Father and Mother*, Deut. xxvii. 16. *My Son, hear the Instructions of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother*, Prov. i. 8. And in many other Places, the same Duty is required to be paid the Mother with the Father ; in most Cases there is equal Reason, in
some

some greater. The Mothers undergo most Pain and Sorrow, bear all the Trouble of their Infancy and Childhood, have, at least, equal, if not greater Affection for them, and the same true Concern for their Good and Welfare ; and therefore in Nature, Reason, and Gratitude, Children are obliged to make no Difference between Father and Mother, as to their Obedience. Indeed, as the Father is superior to the Mother, in natural Strength, Wisdom, and by God's Appointment, and that there is no obeying contrary Commands, Children therefore are especially to obey their Fathers, where they have Power to command, and that both Parents cannot be obeyed ; but they must never obey one Parent to the Prejudice of the other. The Father has no Right to command the Children any Thing undutiful, disrespectful, or injurious to the Mother ; but, should the Inclinations or Desires of Mothers, differ from those of Fathers, in the Choice of Trade, Matches, or other Things of Moment, so that one Parent must be displeased ; in such Case the Father having superior Authority must be obeyed, because the Laws of God and Man have subjected the Wife to the Husband ; and she not being presumed to have a *Will* contrary to her Husband's, the Child who obeys his Father's Command, does not disobey his Mother, because the Mother is to be obedient also : But where the Mother is the *only* Parent, then she is solely to be regarded. I shall conclude this Head with a short Caution to Children ; namely, that they will never be able to remember any Act of Disobedience to their Parents, without much Trouble and

* Remorse, great Sorrow and Concern; it will dwell continually upon them, and haunt them like an evil Spirit; they will heartily wish they had behaved more dutifully, kindly, and obediently, and rather have gone without their Desires, than to occasion any Trouble or Sorrow to their Parents.

The last Thing Children owe their Parents, is *Support* and *Sustenance*; which is evidently comprehended under the Word *Honour*; for so it is used by St. Paul, 1 Tim. v. 3, 17. *Honour Widows, that are Widows indeed, and let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine*; that is, let the Widows who are in Want, and behave soberly, discreetly, and chastly, be relieved and maintained amongst you; and let the Ministers who perform their Duties well and wisely, have a Maintenance better than ordinary. The *Jews* were remarkably kind and tender to their Parents in Distress. It was a common Saying with them, 'You must honour God with your Substance, if you have it; but you must honour your Parents, whether you have it or no, for you must *beg* for them; nay more, you must work, tho' in the public Houses of Correction, to help your Parents.' This, I believe, was the Foundation of the Parents Power to sell their Children; because they or their Children could not be maintained but by such Sale, and therefore sold them, that they might live; a Practice too barbarous and unnatural, to be supported by any other Ground or Reason; and what nothing but extream Necessity could

could make tolerable. But all Nations agree in exacting and commanding the Relief and Sustainance of Parents. *We must honour our Parents exceedingly*, saith *Hierocles*, *affording them the Service of our Bodies, and the Use of our Wealth most chearfully*. And amongst the *Romans*, if a Son was quite free from his Father's Government, yet if his Father came to want, and was denied it by his Son, he, for his Ingratitude, was to return again to his Father's Service, and never be freed more. This Support and Maintenance of Parents is so naturally and necessarily due, that no Laws can tie the Children not to afford it, according to their best Abilities. Bare Sustainance would be due, even to a Traitor proscribed. Thus I have shewn, that the Duties Children owe their Parents, are *Love, Respect, or Honour, Obedience, and Support*, when they stand in Need of it; all these being comprehended in this Command, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*.

But because the Case of going to Law with Parents, is what sometimes happens, and therefore deserves to be considered, it may be proper to do this, before I discourse on the Promise and Encouragement annexed by God, to the honouring our Father and Mother. That Children may lawfully call their Parents into Question, before the civil Magistrate or Judge, must be admitted; but then with many Restrictions. Parents have doubtless a great Authority, but they may abuse it; for they are not incapable of doing Injury. It is also certain, that Children are to be very *subject* to their Parents; yet they are not *Slaves*, and may receive Injury. And whoever can suffer

Wrong, may also be righted, for the Laws of God do not forbid this ; and the Laws of the Land are free and impartial, they make no Difference of Persons, know no Relations, Justice being in this Respect blind. And therefore it is certain, that in some Cases, Children without offending God's Laws, may appeal to the Laws of the Land, against their Parents.

If the Parent be so unnatural, as to deny the Child its Food and Raiment, Remedy at Law may justly be implored, and the Child not guilty of undutiful and disobedient Carriage. So if a Child should be cruelly used by a Parent, the Child might justly apply to the Magistrate, for his Favour and Assistance. In such Cases, the common Sense and Pity of Mankind, would side with the Child against the Parent. But then it is not allowed to make even these Complaints, on any slight Injury ; it must be sharp, and very near intolerable, before Children must appeal to Magistrates. For tho' there are no positive Laws, yet Reason, Custom, and Consent of People, give such Power of Correction to Parents, as are forbidden to any besides ; always presuming, that the Occasion was just, and the Provocation very great, when Parents proceed to much Severity ; the Laws trusting a great deal to parental Kindness and Affection. And yet sometimes there is Need to interpose the Magistrate's Authority, and hinder Passion from proceeding to Extremities. And in all such Cases, the Children are to ask for nothing but Relief and Ease to themselves ; but no Hardship, Penalty, or Punishment to the Parent : That would be impious Cruelty indeed. And as
for

for Matters of Contract, Estate, or Money, a Child ought not to implead his Parent for a slight Injury; the Injustice must be great, pressing, and near intolerable, before a wise, good Man will go to Law with his Parents. We are obliged as *Christians* to bear *somewhat* from every one, and common Sense and Reason will dictate, that we should bear more from a Parent, than another. It should therefore be plain and visible to all considering People, that the Parent is much in the wrong, doing a manifest Injustice, violating the Laws of Nature, and discarding the parental Love and Tenderness, before a Child should publickly contest at Law. The Justice of Children's Cause must be notorious, and the Injury done them manifestly great, before they are permitted by the Rules of Duty, Decency, and Religion to go to Law with their Parents. This Duty indeed, is somewhat altered, when Mothers marry a second Time, apparently prejudicial to their Children, because they thereby seem to translate their Affection and Interest to another Family, and such contested Money or Estate, will then go to a *strange* People, to whom the Children have no Obligation; and therefore that Piety in Children, which would permit the Mother to enjoy in Peace and Quiet, what perhaps in Justice, was not her's, need not here be scrupulous of recovering it from her. While she continues in a State of Widowhood, she is still their Mother, and they all of one Family, and may be presumed to intend nothing but their Advantage; and should she, thro' Mistake, or Covetousness, retain her Children's Right, it might be better for them to be

content with such Loss, if they can, since it will certainly be theirs at last; than give their Parents unnecessary Grief and Trouble, by going to Law. But when a new Affection intervenes, new Interests will arise, and the Wife will make herself as acceptable as she can, to her new Choice, and too often forgets her Children and former Love. In this Case Children are much more at Liberty, to pursue their just Rights, than otherwise they would be.

And yet Children should not be over-biassed by this common Prejudice, that *second Marriages are always injurious to the Children's Rights and Interests*; for it is not always so, tho' too often. and therefore the Injury should be great and certain, before Children contend with their Mother, tho' she may have forgot their Father's House and Family; and even then, the Suit should be managed with all imaginable Care and Tendernefs, and indeed all Contests at Law should be conducted with Charity, Moderation, and Temper: and not with Reproach, Scandal, Malice, and Revenge. The Fear of Injury and Hope of Victory do so exasperate People's Minds, that 'tis the Sense of these ill Consequences, which makes the going to Law with Parents so dreadful; and renders it more eligible, for Children to endure considerable Injury, than seek a lawful Remedy, when so much Mischief ensues, by such unkind Contentions. But after all, tho' it is necessary to secure the Rights and Respects of Parents, yet when they throw off natural Affection, have no Regard to Honesty and Justice, but perversely follow their own Humour, and will not do that
Right

Right to Children, which the Laws of God and Man require ; then Children are not to be blamed for imploring the Assistance of the Laws and Magistrate, to get themselves redressed ; so it is done with all possible Tenderneſs, Reſpect, and Honour.

It remains in the laſt Place, to conſider the Promise and Encouragement annexed, to the Performance of this Command of honouring our Parents, that *thy Days may be long in the Land*. The Land here mentioned was *Canaan*, and the Promise related to the Children of *Iſrael*: But that this Promise of *long Life*, was alſo made to them on performing the reſt of God's Commands, as well as *this*, appears from *Deuteronomy*, Chap. iv. 40. and v. 33. *Ye ſhall walk in all the Ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your Days in the Land, which ye ſhall poſſeſs*. By *long Life* is not ſtrictly meant the Living many Years, but living *happily* and well. Indeed long Life is eſteemed a Bleſſing, and therefore in Scripture it is uſed in that Senſe. But the *Jews* themſelves underſtand it *only*, of being in *general* bleſſed ; and where God ſaw convenient, he bleſſed them with *long Life* in *particular*. Long Life of itſelf is no Bleſſing at all, and ſhort Life generally is no Evil, but a Deliverance from what is much ſo. The ſhort Life of Children, is not ſo much a Punishment to *them*, as their Parents ; and therefore for Children to be untimely taken off for their Diſobedience, muſt doubly afflict the miſerable Parents ; as they loſe their Children in

a State of Disobedience. Such Punishment would indeed be very proper for that Parent, by whose Want of careful, virtuous, and religious Education, his Children become rebellious and disobedient; for then he would bear the Punishment of his own Fault; smart for his Folly and Neglect, and be afflicted, first by his Child's Disobedience, and then in dying an immature Death, the Consequence thereof, both which he might have prevented. But when a Parent has carefully educated his Children, and loves them tenderly, tho' rebellious and disobedient; for such to lose their Children must seem hard, and all would conclude, the Parent was rather punished than the Children; for tho' old Age may be a Blessing, when attended with other Blessings, yet for any to die young, can be no Punishment to them, because Death puts a Period to their Misery and Sufferings. And as for all the Pleasures of this Life, which terminate by Death, they who survive to enjoy them, know the Dead have lost nothing; since the Pleasures of this Life, at the best, are but just enough to sweeten Life, and make it tolerable; and was it not for the Comfort and Benefit of Relations, and to do Good in the World, a short Life would be a great Blessing.

We cannot therefore conclude from the Promise annexed to this Commandment, that long Life will *certainly* attend Obedience to Parents; *that* particular Blessing not being universally entailed on good Children. Every Day's Experience proves the contrary; for we see the most obedient, dutiful, and respectful Children, often removed by hasty, untimely Ends, and such as

gave

gave the greatest Hopes imaginable. Nor must we conclude, that long Life is not sometimes bestowed on obedient Children; for tho' it be not certainly fixed, yet it is not excluded. Nor should we think, that they who arrive to old Age, have therefore been obedient Children, since Experience shews, in too many Instances, that is not true; under these Uncertainties then, there can be no safe Conclusion. The Encouragements that Children have from] this Commandment and its Promise, are, that if long Life is most convenient, their Case and Circumstances considered, they may expect it; but if it will not prove a Blessing, as it never will of itself, then is not God unfaithful in his Promise, if he takes to himself betimes, the best and most obedient Children. For when he promised long Life, he *only* promised what would prove a Blessing; but the Righteous are sometimes in Love and Kindness, *taken away from the Evil to come*; and therefore long Life is not always a Blessing, nor so promised, for God can otherwise bless obedient Children. He hears their Parents Prayers, and will confirm their Blessings. He sometimes blesses them by extraordinary Means and Methods, but oftner in an ordinary Way, by blessing their Care and Labour, promoting their Industry, and giving them Favour in the Sight of others; there being nothing that generally makes Children more acceptable to all People, than a dutiful, obedient Carriage to Parents. Nothing more becomes the Rich and Noble, nothing sooner recommends the Poor and Mean, to Favour and Employment, to Pity and Relief, than that they are good and
helpful

helpful to their Parents in Distress, according to the Advice of the Son of *Syrach*. Chap. iii. 12. *My Son, help thy Father in his Age, and grieve him not as long as he lives. And if his Understanding fail, have Patience with him, and despise him not, when thou art in thy full Strength; for the relieving of thy Father shall not be forgotten, and instead of Sins, it shall be added to build thee up; in the Day of Affliction it shall be remembered.* It will be well remembered by God, and all good People. God will not only bless obedient Children here, but also bestow the Blessings of another Country, of which the Land of *Canaan*, with all its Beauty and Fertility, was but a poor and empty Shadow, even the Blessing of eternal Life in Heaven; where our short Span shall be prolonged to everlasting Ages, where it shall be for ever well with us, where it will be our Pleasure and Reward to be perpetually loving, honouring, and obeying our eternal Parent, the great Creator and Preserver of us all; whom let us beseech to *have Mercy upon us, and to incline our Hearts to keep this Law.*



DISCOURSE III.

DUTY of PARENTS to CHILDREN.

EPHES. VI. 4.

*Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath;
but bring them up in the Nurture and Ad-
monition of the Lord.*



HAVING treated of the Duty of Children to their Parents, and considered some of the most proper Cases, in that Relation; I shall now from the Words of St. Paul, represent the Duty of Parents to their Children. It is granted by all, that in every Relation, whether natural or civil, there is a reciprocal Duty obliging each Party. No one can require Love, Respect, Honour, Service or Obedience from another, without being at the same Time obliged, to do him some good Turn for it; if not done before. God is not indeed a Debtor to any Man, but the Thing at the Bottom, is the same; it is for our Creation, Preservation, all the Blessings of this Life, and the Promises and Hopes

Hopes of a better, that we are obliged to pay him Honour and Service, Praise and Thanksgiving. Without the former, *he* would have no Right to the latter; we need not fear to say so. We should not *praise* God, but for the *Good* we have *received*, nor *pray* to him, but for the *Good* we *expect* to *receive* from him. And tho' he does not antecedently owe these Favours and Blessings to Mankind, yet it is necessary that he bestows them, before any Obligation can be laid on Men, to pay him Prayer, or Praise, Honour, Service, or Thanksgiving. There is nothing more certain, than that, as all Duties and Relations are at first founded on Benefits hoped for, or received; so no one can require any Thing as a Duty from another, without having obliged him, or intending to do so, by something answerable to what he asks. And tho' the parental Relation, may seem of all other, to be most at Liberty, yet in Truth, all the Right and Claim they have, to the Love, Respect, Service, and Obedience, of Children, is founded on the Love they shew, and the Good they do them, according to their Understanding and Ability. And therefore should Parents, out of Cruelty, or Wantonness, expose their new-born Infants to the Rage of wild Beasts, or throw them into Rivers, and they by good Providence escape; however they afterwards might *own* them for Parents, and pay them Love, Honour, or Obedience, yet they would not *owe* it them. Their barbarous Usage cancelled the Bond of Nature, and left them under no other Obligation to their Parents, than to Strangers.

For

For as to their *Being* given by them, they took it away, as soon, and cruelly, as they could.

I mention this to prove, that the Obligation of Children to love, honour, respect, and obey their Parents, is originally founded on the Parents Love and Care of *them*; and to shew, that no one can require any Thing from another as a Duty, to whom he does not also *owe* something, by Way of Duty. This ought to be premised, not only in Respect of Parents Duty to their Children, but also as to the Duties of all Relations, whether natural or civil; for in every Relation, each Party is mutually, tho' differently obliged to one another. As Children are bound to honour their Parents, so are Parents to look after, and take Care of their Children. But having already observed most of the particular Cases, where Parents are obliged to shew their Love, and perform their Duty to their Children, I need now only to consider, one Part of the Behaviour of Parents to their Children; and that is, *not to provoke them to Wrath, but to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*. I will then, in the first Place, shew, what it is, to *provoke Children to Wrath*; in the second, why Parents should not do so; and lastly, what is meant by *bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*.

To provoke any one to Wrath, is commonly meant, to irritate and stir them up to Anger; whether the Provocation be just or needless, with or without Reason. Not that Parents are here advised, never to provoke their Children to Anger, since to prevent this, may not be in their Power, and which will sometimes unavoidably happen,
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in discharging their Duty to them. When Parents see their Children in Danger of falling into evil Courses, they are not to consider, whether what is proper to reclaim them and prevent their Misery, will grieve or anger them, but to venture that, and do their Duty. They are to regard their Amendment, and not how such Methods will be taken. For God the Father of us all, *chastens us for our Profit, that we may partake of his Holiness.* And yet he knows, that *no Chastening is for the present joyous, but grievous, tho' it afterwards yields the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness, to them that are exercised thereby.* The Good of Children is what the Parent is to regard, and tho' the Method of procuring it, may excite in them a wrathful Spirit, yet ought it not to be declined on that Account; because the reasonable Hopes of its yielding the Fruit of Goodness and Amendment, will justify what they do. And therefore the just Exercise of the parental Power, is no Way restrained in these Words, *not to provoke Children to Wrath*, for Fear of making the Children a little uneasy. But there being in *St. Paul's* Time, as there always will be, some Parents of a most hard, inhuman Temper, who think they have by Nature, Authority to say, do, and use their Children like Tyrants and Barbarians, to deal harshly and severely by them; because of such, it neither was, nor is, unnecessary to command and enjoin them, as in the Text, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath*: And then the Words signify, the provoking them by constant, hard, and evil Usage, to such a Degree of settled Anger, as will cer-

certainly end in *Hatred*. The parental Yoke, is of all others, naturally the most light and easy. When God would express his Love and Tenderness to Men, he can no Way do it more feelingly, than by calling himself our *Father*, and assuring us he treats us, as Parents do their Children. And when we would express our tender Concern for any Person, we can say it in no Words so emphatical, as that we *used him as a Father would his Son*. Indeed St. *Paul's* Words, and all Admonitions and Injunctions to Parents, to use their Children kindly, and with Gentleness, seem to be directed to a very small Part of Mankind; the Byass of human Nature being the other Way. But to those few, to whom they are applicable, it may be fit to say, — Parents, shew not yourselves too hard, austere, and rigorous to your Children, and that for these Reasons, (which was the second Thing to be considered) because it is unnatural in itself, and tending to very evil Consequences.

It is unnatural, and not acting as other People, or most other Creatures do act. Not to feel the same Affections, and shew the same Kindness as other Parents, looks as if they did not belong to Mankind. For 'tis manifest, such Children are not as happy, as others, because they do not partake of the common Lot of Kindness, with other Children. And there can be no Reason for this, if in the Parents Power to make them as easy. A Man is obliged to be as good and kind to all, as he can; and it must be very weak to suppose, he has more Authority and Liberty, to deal *ill* with

with his Children, than with others. For tho' a Man is allowed to do that with his Children, which he may not do, to Strangers; yet this is on Presumption it will tend to the Children's Benefit. And for this Reason, the Laws of God and Man, leave Children to the Parents, and will not punish them for doing that to *them*, which would be punished, if done to *Strangers*. But neither of those Laws, allow Parents to injure their Children, nor does Nature give them any such Power; but only to afflict them for a Time, in Order to their Good. And therefore when a Parent's Conscience informs him, that his afflicting a Child, is neither designed, nor tends to do him any Good, it must also assure him, he is acting unnaturally, and without any just Authority. And tho' *no* human Laws ought to prevent such Severity, (unless the Commonwealth suffer by it) because it might hinder Parents from exercising a just Authority, on reasonable and necessary Occasions over offending Children; yet the Man who acts these unnatural Severities must know, that he is cruelly injurious, and usurps a Power which does not naturally belong to him. A Parent must therefore take Care, that he mistake not the Silence of God's Word, and the Liberty that human Laws leave to Parents in the Management of their Children, nor yet his own severe, rough Temper; for the Power and Authority that Nature gives him: Since he may be unnatural to his Children, tho' God's Word prescribe him no Rule how to proceed, tho' human Laws allow what he does, and tho' his own Temper incline him to be cruel and inhuman;
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and may be punished by our common Parent, for such unnatural and cruel Usage.

Parents are also to be warned against too great and constant Severities, on Account of the evil Consequences thereof. For it strangely discourages and breaks their Children's Spirits, when all they say and do, is *ill* taken. Whether they please, and do their Duty or not, yet they receive the *same* Treatment and unkind Usage. Therefore says St. *Paul* in another Place, (*Colos. iii. 21.*) *Provoke not your Children to Anger, lest they be discouraged*; lest perpetual reproofing and correcting, make them despair of pleasing, and so become heartless and faint in Spirit, under their Oppression. Constant Misery and Pain of Mind, will break a tender and ingenuous Heart. *Oppression*, says *Solomon*, *will make a wise Man mad*. There is a natural Desire in all Inferiors, to be acceptable to their Superiors, more especially in Children, with Regard to their Parents; but when they perceive such their Endeavours are fruitless, this vigorous Desire, by Degrees wears off. Hope of succeeding is the Life and Spring of all Attempts, and when that fails, Desire languishes. When young Persons do all they can to engage their Parents Affection, and still find them morose, sharp, and austere, this must naturally so tire, and make them disconsolate, and faint, as for them to give over all Endeavours for the future. Nor is this all, for such severe, rugged Treatment, commonly produces a slavish Fear of Parents, and makes Children to regard them as Tyrants. And indeed a severe, and never pleased Parent, is no better than a little Tyrant. This

This puts Children on mean and disingenuous Shifts, to make their Peace, or avoid their Parents Sight. They are never easy but at Distance from them; and if they can't please them with the Truth, they will endeavour it with Lies and Tricks, and this often ends in Hatred. For those whom we constantly *fear*, we shall soon learn to *hate*. Nothing but Love and Kindness beget Love, and nothing so likely to beget Hate, as constant ill Usage.

It is not difficult, even for young People, to distinguish between a sudden, transient, accidental Anger; and a continual Disposition to Severity. When Anger becomes habitual, and Parents are ever ready to quarrel, and punish, then it is natural for Children to despair of pleasing them, and to conclude they are the Objects of their Hatred and Aversion; and this will gradually beget Coldness and Neglect, Disregard to their Commands, and such Aversion, as will soon end in perfect Hatred. For a constant and austere Usage, and an implacable Severity, will always go for Hatred, with them who feel the Burthen of it. The provoking Children to Wrath, is of sad Consequence to both Parents and Children. No one can hardly be easy under the known Ill-will of any Relation, much less such as is very near. It is impossible for either Parents to hate their Children, or Children their Parents, or only to think so, without great Grief and Trouble; it sits so hard on their Minds that they are never quiet. When near Relations quarrel, all Things besides afford no settled Peace, or Pleasure, so long as that great Breach continues.

nues. And this even where the injured Party is satisfied, with the Reasonableness and Justice of his being at Variance, and sees the Necessity of continuing his Displeasure. This uneasy Condition of Mind, should then be one Motive, to preserve Love and Friendship between Relations. And since the Hearts of Parents, do naturally incline to Children, and that *Love* is said to *descend*; this should move them not to irritate Children too far, by cruel Usage, lest they put it out of the Power of Reconciliation. For when Hatred is once taken up, and begins to settle in People's Minds, it is hard to root it out again. And of all Enmities, the fiercest and most implacable are those of near Relations. These are some of the evil Consequences which attend Parents *provoking their Children to Wrath*; that is, using them so ill, unkindly, and severely, as to make them lose the Bands of Duty and Submission, to become refractory, and hardened in Rebellion. Indeed this is a Case that seldom happens, there being in all Probability throughout the *Christian* World, twenty fond and tender Parents, to *one* that is austere and over rigorous; and more are undone by Softness and Indulgence, than miscarry by Severity. But as *St. Paul* supposes, and all Ages supply us with some Instances of brutal, unnatural Parents, it was necessary to shew the Reasons, why Parents should not deal cruelly with their Children.

The last Thing to be considered, is to *bring Children up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*; that is, to educate them in the *Christian* Religion; teach them their Duty; learn them
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what they are to believe and practise ; instruct them in the Knowledge of *Jesus Christ* ; shew them their Condition by Nature, and to what they are advanced by Grace ; and to inform them of the Deliverance wrought by *Christ*, and all the Particulars of that merciful Dispensation. All this is naturally comprehended under the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*. And for Parents to bring up their Children in the Knowledge and Practise of the *Christian* Religion, is the greatest Kindness they can do them, the greatest Blessings they can bestow. Without this, Wisdom, Riches, and Honours, cannot make them happy. Taking therefore the Words of St. *Paul* to signify the educating of Children in the Knowledge of *Christ*, and his Religion, the Sense and Meaning of the Apostle is this ; ‘ Would you, Parents, ‘ have your Children honour you, and behave ‘ obediently, as in all Respects becomes them, ‘ then bring them up in the Fear and Nurture of ‘ the Lord, teach them the *Christian* Law, let ‘ them read and understand the holy Scriptures ; ‘ there they will see their Duty, find such Lessons ‘ of Instruction, such Encouragements and Promises of large Rewards, as will secure their ‘ Honour and Respect, Service and Obedience to ‘ their Parents.’ But because the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, seems to be set in Opposition to *provoking to Wrath*, and that a religious Education does not sufficiently excuse the provoking Children to Wrath, it may be more proper to understand by *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, such a religious Reproof and Correction, as is agreeable to the Doctrine, and
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good Spirit of *Christ* the Lord ; because this Sense will include the other also ; and then the Meaning of *St. Paul* is, ‘ That would you who
‘ are Parents, be honoured and obeyed by your
‘ Children ? Then take the properest Methods
‘ for that Purpose. Do not think to effect your
‘ Designs, by being hard, morose, and always
‘ out of Humour, by cruel and inhuman Treatment, by continually discouraging them with
‘ Frowns and harsh Looks, Threats and severe
‘ Chastisements ; for such slavish Usage, illiberal Treatment, and daily Menaces of disinheriting, as is sometimes used, do but inflame
‘ and exasperate them to worse Behaviour, and
‘ by Degrees extinguish their natural Piety and
‘ Affections ; make them shun and avoid your
‘ Company ; dread you like an Executioner, and
‘ so shake of the Yoke as soon as possible, and
‘ if not hate, yet never love you more. They
‘ are to be won with better Arguments ; you
‘ may secure their Honour and Obedience, by
‘ more natural and gentle Methods. Give them
‘ such good Instructions, as you find in holy
‘ Scripture ; remember them of God’s Commands
‘ to honour and obey their Parents ; admonish
‘ them in the Spirit of Meekness ; caution them
‘ not to transgress the Laws of God by disobeying *their* Parents Commands, when just and
‘ reasonable ; and how they shall one Day answer
‘ for the neglectful or contemptuous Breach of
‘ them.’

If Parents lay at first, this good Foundation, in their Minds, they may after build upon it for ever. It will hold when all Things else fail, it
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will forward all other Considerations, and give Strength to every Argument. Children will be then convinced, that Parents urge no more than God commands, and have no other Interest to pursue, than their Children's Interest. The Reception of any Argument, Advice, or Command, in a great Measure depends, on the Way and Manner of proposing it; and when it appears, that the Benefit of the Party is really intended; when young Persons are convinced of the true Love and Kindness of their Parents, which is easily done, by gentle Usage; they will bear with Patience, a great many hard, uneasy Things. Reproof, Admonition, and even Punishments, will find Submission and Obedience, when they see it is intended for their Benefit. It is certain, that Restraint, or Punishment is not easy, or well taken; a Parent should not expect this; but he should so manage them, that Children, on Consideration and Reflection, may be satisfied, that all such Admonitions, Reproofs, Restraints, and Punishments, were natural and moderate; proper for their Age, Condition, and Offence, and likely to effect Amendment. Such Instruction and Chastisement as this, would look as if it came from the Lord, who never grieves us willingly, or for his Pleasure, but out of Necessity, and for our Amendment and lasting Good; and such as this, would secure the Honour and Respect, the Service and Obedience of Children to their Parents.

I have before observed, that small is the Number of cruel and unnatural Parents, and few the Children who suffer at their Hands. It will not

not therefore be reasonable, that many should apply what has been said, too closely to themselves, or suppose it their own Case, whether Parents or Children. For Children are not to think Parents cruel or unnatural, because they have been constantly reprov'd for their evil Words or Practices, and restrained from doing Things hurtful to themselves and others, or sharply punish'd for having done them; since all these are the Duties of Parents, and cannot be their Faults. It may also happen, that Parents may be soon angry, and with great Justice and Reason long retain it, when Children think otherwise; because *they* better understand Things, see the natural Tendency of many of their Actions, and the Consequences, Hazards, and sinful Courses they may engage them in; and many other Things, which the Ignorance, Thoughtlessness, and Inexperience of Children, keep them from considering. Besides, Children are too much concerned in their own Behalf, to pass a true and impartial Judgment on the Severities they undergo; too apt to justify their own Conduct, and to conclude themselves, if not entirely innocent, yet undeserving such Reproof or Punishment. And after all, it is more reasonable, that Children should suffer the Rigours of their Parents, than that Parents, out of Fear of offending on this Side, should be restrained from using such Severities, as they best knowing their Children's Humours and Inclinations, shall think most proper and convenient; or, that Children should dispute, and contest their Right, or withdraw their Obedience, on any such Pretence.

Of two Evils, this would certainly be the greater. And therefore, however hard and heavy the Dominion of some Parents may be, the only Way to ease the Children, whilst they continue under them, is a meek, submissive, dutiful Deportment. Patience, and a quiet bearing what is laid on them, will sooner bring Parents to Consideration and Reason, and mollify their Fury, if not their Hearts; when a perverse and contumacious Obstinacy will but exasperate to greater Anger and Severity: And Time will at last vanquish their Austerity, and set the Children at Liberty, so that they have not long, or much to suffer. And therefore, tho' the Text is, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath*, yet I will end with the foregoing Command, *Children, obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right.*



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DISCOURSE IV.

DUTY of PARENTS to CHILDREN.

I TIMOTHY V. 8.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.



AMONGST other Duties incumbent on Parents, that of making Provision for their temporal Livelihood, is certainly one, and enjoined by St. Paul in Words of great Weight and Moment. *If any provide not for his own, specially those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* I shall first explain the Terms here used; secondly, consider what different Provisions are to be made for Children. Thirdly, Discuss the Case of disinheriting Children. To provide, is to take Care of, and make Provision for the

Maintenance, Livelihood, and Subsistence, proper to the Age, Condition, and Quality of another. To provide for *our own*, means such as are related to, and depends on us. To provide for those of *our own House*, is to be understood, our Kindred and Family, especially our Children. To *deny the Faith*, was esteemed the greatest Sin, a Christian could commit; *Apostacy* was thought more heinous than *Infidelity*. To *deny the Faith* signifies a Man's being as bad as possibly he can, tho' he do not actually deny the Faith, nor become an *Infidel*. For a Parent may be very negligent and cruel towards his Children, without renouncing the Christian Doctrine. To *deny the Faith* then, is to act in Contradiction to it, to neglect, or despise its Commands.

They who profess themselves *Christians*, and acknowledge Christ to be their King and Law-giver, are to guide and govern themselves by his Directions, to do what he commands, and leave undone whatever he forbids; this, all Christians are obliged to, by their Baptism, and Profession. When therefore any practise in Opposition to this *Faith*, they are said to deny it, tho' not formally and solemnly. Such *profess that they know God, but in Works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good Work reprobate*, Tit. i. 16. or void of Judgment. And the doing thus, is said to be *worse than being an Infidel*, because Unbelievers have not the same Light, Knowledge, and Understanding of these Duties, that Believers have. The Meaning therefore of the Text, as applied to Parents is; 'That
' if any Parent who professes Christianity, neg-
' lects

‘lects or refuses duly to provide for his Children,
‘according to his Understanding and Ability, he
‘is really a bad Man, and in Effect denies
‘the Faith, by not paying Obedience to Christ’s
‘Commands, which enjoin all Parents to pro-
‘vide for their Children; and he is much worse
‘than an Infidel, being more obliged to provide
‘for his Children, than Unbelievers are, who
‘have not the same Laws, Commands, and En-
‘couragements, that Christians have.’

The Terms of the Text being thus explained, before I proceed on the other Heads, it may be proper to observe; That the Faith of Christ, always includes Obedience to his Laws, and that such Faith most strongly obliges Christians, to all natural Duties. Barely to believe the Gospel, is not that Faith, which will of itself avail; and tho’ Men should live, in the Practice and Obedience of Christ’s Commands, yet if they externally disown the Belief of Christianity, this is *denying the Faith*. In the primitive Ages of Christianity, it was common for Men publicly to deny themselves to be Christians, in order to escape Punishment or Death, tho’ they were Christians, and lived as such. But this was their great Mistake, and severely reprov’d by our Saviour, who tells his Disciples, that they *who denied him before Men, should be denied by him, before his Father in Heaven*. So that ’tis evident, whoever to save himself from Shame or Pain, in Word denies his being a Christian, does *deny the Faith*, and renounces Christianity in a most important Article, and shall have no Advantage from Christ’s Promises, tho’

he lives a good and virtuous Life. Nor is the bare Profession of Christianity, no, nor the Belief of all its Articles, enough to secure a Man from denying the Faith, because he may deny it in Works, tho' he believe in his Heart, and confess with his Mouth, that Jesus is the Son of God. And the Reason is, that every Christian is obliged by virtue of his Profession, not only to believe, but also to evidence such Faith, in all his Actions, to shew it in his Life and Conversation. Faith includes Obedience to Christ's Laws, or otherwise, it is both vain and dead. And the Christian Faith does also strongly oblige us, to all natural and civil Duties. It is much to the Honour of our Religion, that it provides for the Security and Benefit of Mankind, even in this World; its general Tendency, is to set Men at ease, and make them happy; its great Endeavour, is to secure the Duties of all Relations to each other; it does not leave Men to be moved by such Considerations alone, as natural Reason suggests, but lays the powerful Commands of God on them, with the Sanction of great and fearful Penalties to such as disobey, and with the Encouragements of endless Happiness to Men's Obedience. Christianity provides for every Person, by laying its Commands, extending its Promises and Threats to every single Christian, to oblige them to perform their several Duties to every Relation. And this ought to recommend the Christian Religion to all considering People, above all other Laws and Dispensations whatsoever; for it is framed to make Men happy in this Life, and none can be made uneasy, miserable, or suffer evil from another,

ther, without the Violation of some *Christian* Command, which if observed, would have prevented it.

Having premised thus much, I proceed, *secondly*, to consider what sort of Provision Parents ought to make for their Children. To determine this, regard must be had to their Age, Condition, and Capacity. When Children are helpless, all they want and can enjoy, must be provided for them. As they grow in Years, their Quality, Condition, Capacity, and Abilities both of Mind and Body, are to be considered; and they must then be inured to Labour, Diligence, and Industry. Parents are not only obliged to provide for their Children, Money, Lands, and Houses, but also Abilities of Mind and Body, to obtain, and preserve, the Benefits they intend them. They must accustom them young, to Application and Attention to Business; it being necessary for both Rich and Poor; without them the Poor will never be Rich, and the Rich will be soon poor. The Poor can never discharge the Duty of Parents, without inuring their Children to Labour and Hardship. This Provision they are only capable of making for them, and this they are obliged to make, and the sooner they begin to use them to Labour, Diligence, and Industry, the kinder will they be, and the better provide for them. To let them continue lazy, idle, and rather beg their Bread, than labour for it, is not only of pernicious Consequence to the Commonwealth, but even most fatal to Children, and the unkindest Thing they can do them; for it entails on them present Misery, and often untimely Death, by

engaging them in wicked Courses, the sure and ready way to ruin. But to bring them up to labour, or Business of some kind, keeps them at least in a mean Sufficiency, if not in Plenty ; and puts them into a Capacity of bettering their Condition. So that poor People do really offend God, and injure their Children, by keeping them idle, and not constantly inuring them to such Labour, as God enables them to bear. This they are capable of doing for them, and to this God hath obliged them, and if they omit it, they *deny the Faith, and are worse than Infidels.*

As for the richer and better sort of People, their Quality and Condition are to be considered, in determining what Provision they ought to make, for their Children. The Custom and Usage of the Country make many Things decent and fit, which would otherwise be indifferent ; and Distinction of Quality and Condition, is absolutely necessary to preserve Quiet and Order in the World. It is impossible for Mankind to live in Peace, without a due Subordination of one Condition to another ; nor could Religion and Morality otherwise live and flourish. And tho' it is impossible to prescribe any Parent a Rule of Provision for his Children, either as to Kind or Quantity ; yet it cannot be difficult for himself to do it, if he does but remember these *two* Things : First, not to educate his Children above the Provision he designs them. And secondly, whatever Provision he intends, that he inure them to as much Labour, Diligence and Industry, Attention and Application, as they are capable of bearing.

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This Method should be taken with all Children ; the poorest are not too mean for these Qualities, nor the richest above them. A Parent ought not to educate his Children above what he intends them, because it will slacken their Diligence and Industry, on Presumption it will be unnecessary ; and the Disappointment will be great and troublesome to them, without any Advantage. It being much more easy to bear a mean Condition, than to fall into it, from a plentiful Fortune ; which is the Case of Persons better educated than provided for. The soft and tender Usage of People, when young, and able to Labour and bear Hardship, is a great Diskindness to them, without an answerable Provision afterwards. The richest Parents that are ought not to use their Children too tenderly. Let them leave them as well provided as they can ; but 'tis Cruelty in Parents to leave them only Pride and Laziness, an Incapacity both of Body and Mind, to do themselves any Service. People of appearing Fashion and Quality, tho' more to be pitied, are as much to be blamed, as the poorer sort, who will not inure their Children to Labour and close Application. The Effects of this unadvised way of Education, are so visible, as to need no Caution against it. The Men Children either fall into the Meanness of Servitude, the Refuge of the idle and uninstructed Part of Mankind, or in Despair, have Recourse to the Wars abroad, or to Robberies at Home ; the Women fall too often into the Hands of wicked Tempters, thro' want of Ability honestly to employ themselves, and an utter Incapacity

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of maintaining their Condition. Poverty rendring them unfit for their *Equals*, and their soft expensive Education, making their *Inferiors* afraid to match with them, besides the hazard of bringing the *Spirit of a good Family* along with them.

There is also the opposite Extream, namely, a mean and sordid Education, when Parents design to leave them a great Fortune. Tho' this is not a Sin, yet 'tis great Indecency and Indiscretion, and what often has ill Consequences, and cannot easily have others. For such young People being certain, of one Day succeeding to a Fortune superior to their Education, will despise, or neglect their Business; and when they come to their Estates, will then grow Extravagant, and make a very ill Use thereof. A mean and sordid Education, with the Prospect of a plentiful Condition to follow, will make Children contract a mean and sordid Spirit, and in the midst of Plenty to live a wretched penurious Life; or else they will shake off their Condition, and betake themselves to loose profuse Courses, and be undone by too great Plenty. A prudent Parent will therefore carefully avoid both these Extreams, either of educating his Children much *above* or *below* the Provision he designs to make for them; he will fit them with an Education suitable to what he intends them, observing a *mean*, without over, or under doing it, and which will render the Provision he can make for them the more useful and serviceable; and where he is able to provide handsomly for his Children, let him by all Means inure them to Diligence and Industry, Application and Attention
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of Mind. These Qualities may chance to make some amends for the Defect of Money or Estate, but no Provision will sufficiently supply the Defect of *them*. By *these* many emerge out of great Difficulties and Straits, and make their Way to Plenty and Prosperity ; and many more for want of these, decline from Plenty to much Misery ; so that no Fortune is above, or can continue well without them. And the true Reason why so many People of Fashion, are distinguished as much by their Vices, as their Birth and Quality, from their Inferiors, is, that they are too softly educated, and never constrained to any Thing laborious and difficult. For if they are not taught how to employ their Time in some Thing fit and worthy of them when young, they will never know how to do it when grown up ; so that Parents, who are only careful to provide Estates for their Children, forget half their Business, which is, to fit their Children for their Estates. And it not being customary to put People of Quality to Trades or Callings, it must be worse with them than their Inferiors ; if they have not something equivalent to such Employments, to quicken their Industry and Diligence ; to keep them busy and amused as profitably as they can ; to inure them to the Labours of the Mind, and fit them for Services, that in Time, may be proper for them. For they will never be qualified, to discharge any publick Duties, and serve their Country in Offices of Honour and Advantage, unless they are bred up young, in a diligent industrious Pursuit of such Attainments, as will qualify them for those noble Services. Experience shews,
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that all Provision for Children, without this Care, signifies little. A large Fortune only proves a great Temptation to Folly and Extravagance, unless the Mind is fitted to it, and prepared to use it well and wisely. So that the Kindness, Parents are so forward to express for their Children, by amassing great Estates and Fortunes for them, will not be so truly beneficial to them, as they intend; unless they also take more Care about their Education, by inuring them to Diligence and Industry, close Application and Attention to some Employ, however mean and inconsiderable; for they will thereby contract good Habits, be fit for Business of greater Moment, when it comes, and be enabled to repair the Breaches Chance may make in their Estates.

I shall now consider the Case of Parents, disinheriting of Sons, and depriving Daughters of their Fortunes; and whether such Proceedings are to be reconciled with Reason, Nature, good Conscience, and the Laws of our Religion. That Children should inherit their Parents Estates and Goods, is agreed by all civilized Nations, governed by Laws; and the Reason is, because no one hath a *better* Right and Claim to their Estates, whether we consider the Parents Labour in acquiring them, or their Affection to their Children. And therefore the civil Law, which is the publick Reason, gives Children the Estate of their Parents when they die Intestate, without any Will. But then the manner of proportioning and dividing their Estate to Children, hath always been uncertain, most Kingdoms differing from one another in that Point. And it seems most proper,
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that this should be determined by the Laws and Constitutions of every Country. The noisy Pretences of a *divine Right of Succession* in Favour of the Eldest born, if well examined, will appear to be built on prudential Considerations *only*, backed with the Authority of God's Commands to his own People the *Jews*. When a Child is born, 'tis natural it should enjoy what the Parent leaves, because there is no one else to build up his Name and Family. But when the Parent comes to have more Children, the *Necessity* of the Eldest succeeding, grows somewhat less, so, there being more to answer the same Design and End, that of building up the Name and Family, as well as the Eldest; and then the *Necessity* is changed into *Decency* and *Conveniency*. And it is no doubt most decent, that the Elder should be preferred to the Younger, because he was before him; if there be no Reason to the contrary. To be born the first, is the lucky Chance that God hath given him; the Lot by which Differences that might arise between Children, are decided; and this is what I call *Conveniency*, for the Eldest to inherit the better Part of their Parents Estates. Where it is found necessary for the raising and preserving Families, that the better Part of an Estate should go with him, who is to keep up the Name of a House, there is all the Reason for the Eldest to succeed; because he is the eldest by the Determination of God, and not the Artifice of Man. And there is little more than this, in the Eldest succeeding before any other, except what is taken from God's Commands to his own People the *Jews*. That the Eldest among the *Jews*, were
born

born to many Privileges and Honours above the rest of their Brethren, and were to inherit their Fathers Possessions, appears from many Places in the *Old Testament* [See *Deut.* xxi. 15. *Gen.* xlix. 3. 2 *Chron.* xxi. 3.] But how any, unless *Jews*, can lay Claim to such Succession, is not so manifest. It will then perhaps be asked, how the disinheriting of Children can be a Case of Conscience, if the Laws and Commands of God to the *Jews*, in this particular, do not affect *Christians*? To which I answer, that a Command of God to the *Jews*, neither is, nor ought to be, the Rule of Conscience to *Christians*, any farther, than it is agreeable to the Light of Nature and true Reason. And they who think otherwise are under a Mistake, and bring a new Yoak on themselves; for a Command to the *Jews*, only obliges them. But when God's Command to the *Jews*, carries its Reason, Decency, and Conveniency along with it; when the wise and civilized People of most Nations, adopt it into their Laws, and it becomes the Usages and Customs of a Land; then such Command of God to the *Jews*, looks as if it affected *Christians*. But indeed, it does but look so, for in Truth, it is the Weight of those other Considerations, that enforces such Command. Thus we disregard many Commands of God to the *Jews*, only because we do not find them reasonable in themselves, nor convenient for us.

Since therefore these are the Reasons and Considerations, that induce Parents to make such particular Provision for their eldest Children, by leaving them the better Part of their Estates; they

they will unavoidably feel Concern and Trouble, if without sufficient Cause and Reason, they act contrary to this Rule. The Causes commonly assigned, to justify Parents disinheriting their Children, being a great many, I will only observe the most considerable. First, that of *striking* Parents, has ever been esteemed a sufficient Cause. There appears so much Undutifulness and Impiety in such Violence, that none can hear of it, without desiring and assenting to its Punishment. The Antients allowed but of two Excuses for this Crime, the one was, when they could not possibly avoid some *mighty* Mischief from their Parents, without striking them ; as in self Defence from some Blow that might endanger them, or some Evil not intended the Child, but might be the Effect of blind and unadvised Rage : In such Case, if a Child struck his Parent, it was *excused*, tho' not *allowed*, but they did not think it deserved to be disinherited. The other Excuse for wounding, or striking of Parents, was, if done in fighting for, and defending their Country. The Ancients preferred the Liberties and Safety of their Country to all other Considerations. If a Father took part with the Enemies of his Country, and in Fight was wounded by his Son, this did not forfeit his Birth-right, he was not hereby presumed undutiful, or impious, nor to be punished as such. The Duty he owed his Country was antecedent to, and greater than what he owed his Parent. Unless for these two Causes, Children might not touch the Hair of their Parents Head, without losing all the Right and

and Advantage, to which their Birth and Descent^t might entitle them.

Another Cause that justified a Parent in disinheriting his Child, was contriving his Death, by Poison or other secret Method, or to entrap him into any Mischief. He was deservedly thought unworthy to receive any Benefit from Parents, who could thus act by them. Nor are Children to *accuse* Parents of any Crime, for they are to think the best of their Parents, to construe every thing in their Favour, and not to be convinced, when it is against them, but *by* plain Matter of Fact; and therefore an *Accuser* of his Parents, has always been considered, as a Person deserving to be cut off from all their Favour.

These Things touch the Parents Person, and are the immediate Effects of Childrens ill Intentions; but there are other Causes that justify Parents in disinheriting their Children. As when the Parent falls into Frenzy, is taken Captive by Enemies Abroad, or imprisoned at Home, if the Child neglects either to look carefully after him, and make due Provision for him, or get his Liberty, if in his Power; all these Cases afford the Parent, when he recovers his Understanding and Freedom, a just Occasion to disinherit and throw off such Child; for every one sees, he was unnatural and deserves no Favour. Not that Children *always* offend against their Duty, who do not pay their Parents Debts, and deliver them from Bonds and Imprisonments; for *sometimes* Children are but just able to live themselves, having Families of their own to maintain; and should they discharge their Parents Debts, must
contrast

contract new ones themselves. Sometimes Parents are so extravagant, that there would be no End of paying for them ; and therefore all Things should be well considered, before we condemn Children for suffering Parents to lie in Prison and Captivity. Other Causes assigned to justify the disinheriting Children, are such as concern not the Parents Person, but in some Respects his Fame and Reputation ; as when they are extremely wicked, scandalous, and immoral, reflect Disgrace and Infamy on the Parents and Family, and give no Hopes of Reformation and Amendment, but seem irreclaimable. Vice and Virtue are of such Importance, that they deserve as much to be considered by Laws, as Right and Wrong in building and preserving Families. It greatly tends to the Advantage of a State and Government, that Virtue in Children should be encouraged, by the Hopes of succeeding to their Father's Estates, and that notorious Vice should receive the like Discouragement. Compassions of Nature, which are often Weakness, ought not to carry it above the Considerations of Virtue and Goodness, for a Child to succeed to all the Advantages of Honour and Estate, let him be never so vicious, immoral, and unworthy his Birth and Education, *only* because he happened to be born of such Parents. A Parent has not a Method more likely to succeed, nor any Restraint so powerful over the insolent and vicious Tempers of Children, as that of disinheriting them, when they render themselves deserving of it. And therefore 'tis great Wonder, and Pity also, to see some Parents unadvisedly divest themselves of this Power,

Power, by putting their Children in full Possession of what they have, before their Death. For tho' it may sometimes be fit and reasonable to do this, yet it is but seldom ; the Necessity ought to be pressing, and the Advantages very great, before it is done. This forward and intended Kindness of Parents, have made many Children disobedient and unnatural, that to all Appearance would have been very dutiful, if they had been still kept in Expectation. There is a vast Difference between a sordid, unnatural Closeness, that will part with nothing to Children before Death, and such an open, profuse Folly, as will part with every Thing, and lay the Parent at the Child's Mercy. By doing this, the Parent loses one of the most effectual Means of keeping Children dutiful and good, virtuous and obedient ; for when there is no more Expectation, there will be no more Dependance, and then they grow, not only neglectful, but insolent and unnatural. What has been said, equally relates to Daughters, when they transgress the Laws of Honour and Virtue.

All these Cases are so reasonable, as to justify Parents disinheriting their Children. When Children are guilty of any of these Things, Parents are acquitted by themselves and others. Their own Conscience makes them no Reproaches of Cruelty, Injustice, or want of natural Affection ; and without these Faults, a Parent will neither be easy, nor innocent, in casting off his Children. A Parent must know of more Offences and Provocations, than other People do, and he ought to know enough to justify him, before he should re-

ject his Child. These Things are not duly considered, by all Parents, who exercise this supreme Authority over their Children, of disinheriting and casting them off, for weak and trivial Causes, and many Times for what they cannot help; as ill Shape, Defect of Parts, personal Dislike, and such small, little venial Faults, that might be pardoned in a tolerable good *Servant*, and should be overlooked in *Children*. Certain it is from Scripture and Experience, that Parents can be hard and unnatural to their Children, and do them great Injury. Sometimes the *second* Wife, by false and soft Insinuations, if not down-right Accusation, makes way to the Inheritance, for her Children by the *second* Marriage, to the Prejudice of those by the *first*; and sometimes this is done, by other Relations, who have no distant Prospect of succeeding. Nothing can be more malicious and wicked than this. A Parent ought to be very cautious how he admits of Accusations, and to weigh all Things well before he believes, for the Peace of his own Mind much depends on this. But most certainly, he may disinherit his Son, for such Causes as have been mentioned, and this with the Consent of Reason and Sense, the Laws and Customs of wise Nations, the Examples of the best Men, the Approbation of God's Law, and his own Conscience, as safely as he may do any Thing else. Nor is there any Reason for the next who succeeds, to have any Terror on his Mind, or expect God's Anger and Judgments to follow. For when a Man comes innocently, and without his Fault or Seeking, to inherit an Estate, there can be no Reason to fear God's Anger, apprehend

prehend his Judgments, or the want of his Blessing, if he do not otherwise provoke him.

I shall conclude with this one Observation ; That Parents who consume their whole Estate, with which they should provide for their Children, in Gaming, Drinking, Riot, Luxury, and sinful Pleasures, no better discharge their Duty, to their Children ; than those, who for little or no Cause, disinherit their Children, and cut them off from their Estate. Nay, a Parent who is any way *abused*, into the wronging of his Children, is much more innocent, than he who riotously, vainly, and viciously spends the Estate, that would contribute to his Children's Subsistence and Welfare ; because the one willingly deprives himself of the Means of doing his Duty ; the other is reasonable, tho' mistaken, perhaps, thro' the *Adits* of other People,





DISCOURSE V.

DUTY of WIVES to HUSBANDS.

I PETER iii. 1, 2.

Ye Wives be in Subjection to your own Husbands that if any obey not the Word, they also may, without the Word, be won by the Conversation of the Wives : while they behold their chaste Conversation coupled with Fear.



THE Scripture in many Places, lays most exprefs Commands on Wives, to live in Subjection to their Husbands. And this Passage of St. Peter, contains not only the *Command*, but one of the good *Effects* of such *Submission*, which is a great *Encouragement* to perform it. The Command is, for *Wives* to be in *Subjection to their Husbands*. The *Encouragement* to obedience is, the *winning over* the unbelieving *Husband*, by the *Conversation of the Wife*, who ought to be *chast*, and to act *with Fear*. It is impossible for any Number of People to subsist long

long together, without a Subordination of one to the other. Where all Command, none will obey; even among Friends and Equals, it is necessary that one should yield to the other, to make Conversation useful. And the longer People are to live together, the greater is the Necessity of Subordination and Subjection; because *there* more Division and Difference will unavoidably arise, which will require the greater Unity; and where two Parties contend for, or pretend to Superiority, or such Equality as that one will not submit, there can be no such Thing as Concord and Agreement.

All this is evident in Kingdoms, Provinces, Cities, and private Corporations. And which should convince Wives, that there is an absolute Necessity of Government in a Family, which supposes Subjection somewhere. They must needs see, that every Family should have its proper Superior, whom all the rest ought to obey.

And when they are convinced of this, the next Enquiry is, whether this Superiority belongs not to Husbands, rather than Wives? And here they should consider, *First*, Where Nature has designed this Sovereignty. *Secondly*, Where Use and Custom have placed it. And *Lastly*, What the Laws of God declare about it. And *First*, We may well presume, that Nature hath designed this Sovereignty to be, where she has given the greatest Strength and Abilities; where she has made the Body and Mind most fit to endure the Toils and Labours, that are absolutely necessary, to the good Government of the World; to the carrying on Business at Home, and Trade Abroad,

to the defending our Country from foreign Enemies, and to the administering Justice to one another. And where we find Nature has best qualified her Creatures, to perform these so necessary Functions, that the World cannot subsist in Peace and Order without them ; we may safely conclude, *there* she designed to place the *Superiority*. But it is demonstrably certain, that Women have not naturally Strength and Abilities of Body and Mind, to go thro' these Things, should Men for a while neglect them ; and who then should do them, but Men whom Nature hath fitted for it ? And in Regard Nature hath made Men necessary for these Works, it follows they are superior to such, as cannot do them ; for where People are in other Respects equal, Strength of Body, and Capacity of Mind, will undoubtedly make them superior. It is so in all other Creatures. And tho' some Women may be superior to Men, in Strength of Body, and Abilities of Mind, in Fineness of Parts, Greatness of Capacity, Soundness of Judgment, and Strength of Memory, yet the Number of such never was, or will be, great enough to prove, that Nature intended to give that Sex the Superiority over Men. Nor would all the Use and Education in the World, ever fit them for the Performances of Trade and Merchandize, to make War Abroad, and execute Justice at Home ; which are evident Indications, that Nature designed to make Men superior to Women.

And agreeable to this manifest Design of Nature, have been the Usages and Customs of all Ages and Nations ; which was the *second* Thing to be enquired into. These indeed have been so
much

much to the Disadvantage of that Sex, in some Countries, that they have not had so great Regard to it, as in Sense and Reason was their due ; having placed Wives but little above their Slaves, or menial Servants, contrary to Reason and Decency, and the Design of Nature, who intended them for Friends and Companions to Husbands in all their Fortunes. Even the wisest and most civilized Nations, have allowed them to be only made for the Solace of Mankind, the Care of some domestick Matters, and the Continuance of the World, and would let them bear no other Part in it. So that the Searches after the Usages and Customs of the World, will do them little Service.

Lastly, I will enquire what help Religion and the Laws of God afford ; the Sanctuary of all the weak, and which provide Security against Oppression and Injustice. *St. Paul's Rules to Women among other Things are, Let the Woman learn in silence, with all Subjection : But I suffer not a Woman to teach, (in public) nor to usurp Authority over the Man, but to be in silence.* And then subjoins these Reasons, *for Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not first deceived, but the Woman being deceived, was first in the Transgression,* 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12, 13. So that the Apostle makes the Creation, or Formation of *Eve* after *Adam*, to be one Reason of her Subjection. And this Reason would have been the same, had both continued Innocent. For it was a Reason, before they transgressed, and therefore *St. Paul* urges the Subjection of all Women to their Husbands,

bands, on that Account, because the first of Men, was before the first of Women. The second Reason of the Woman's Subjection, is taken from *Eve's* being first in the Transgression; she was deceived first, and then deceived her Husband. As she was undone by disobeying God, and *he* by following her, therefore she must rule no more. It was part of her Curse and Punishment that her Desire should be to her Husband, (or subject to him) and he should rule over her. But it may be asked, how this Subjection of the Woman, could be part of the Curse and Punishment for her Transgression, when 'tis plain she was to be thus subject even in Paradise, and State of Innocence, by Virtue of *Adam's* being *first formed*, and then *Eve*, which is *St. Paul's* Argument? To reconcile this, it must be considered, that Subjection in Paradise, would have been no Task, or Burden, but more easy and delightful to obey in that State, than it can be now to Command. It would not have been Obedience, but the doing what they themselves liked and loved. Man then, would have had no Folly, Vanity, Pride, Self-Conceit, or Ill-Nature, from whence proceed all idle, harsh, ungrateful, and imperious Commands; but all his Thoughts, Words and Designs, would have been wise and reasonable, just and kind, regular and orderly, so that the Execution of them, would have been most easy and delightful; they would have carried their Conviction along with them, and appeared so useful, becoming, and necessary, that Women would have hastened with Pleasure to perform them. They would *themselves* also, have wanted that

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extraordinary good Opinion of their Worth and Abilities, which frequently makes them perverse and contradictory when any Thing is enjoined them, and consequently free from that inward Rising and Resistency, which they now have. In short, *Subjection* would have been no Burden to Women, nor the *Command* have given any great Authority to *Men*. To make *Subjection* therefore Part of the *Curse*, and Punishment affixed to *Eve*, and her Posterity of the same *Sex*, it must needs be, that *Subjection* should be in Things difficult and unacceptable, against their Will and Desire; a *Subjection* to many vain and idle, froward and unkind, injurious and austere Commands, which the foolish, severe, imperious Humours of Husbands, will lay on them. *To have their Desires to their Husbands*, here signifies *to be subject to their Wills*. That is, Wives shall not be Mistress of themselves, nor have any Desire satisfied, but what is approved of by their Husbands; they must be wholly under his Power and Government; if he commands what they dislike, yet they ought to obey; however unreasonable and extravagant his Desire may appear, yet still it must govern them, till he thinks fit to yield.

It is impossible to make less of a Punishment and Curse than this. And as *St. Paul* founds this unacceptable *Subjection* of Wives to their Husbands, on this Place in *Genesis*, where God lays it on them as a Punishment for *Eve's* being *first* in the Transgression, it clearly evinces, that it was so commanded by God, from the Beginning of the World. This *Subjection* therefore is

not founded *only*, on the superior Power, Strength, and Abilities of Men over Women ; nor on the Customs and Usages of the World ; but most especially on *God's Command*, who inflicted it as a Punishment on the Sex, for the forward Transgression of their first Mother. And that it might not be evaded from being a Curse and Punishment, the same Thing is frequently commanded in the *New Testament*. As, *Colos. iii. 18. Wives submit yourselves unto your own Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Ephes. v. 22. Wives submit yourselves unto your own Husbands, as unto the Lord, for the Husband is Head of the Wife, even as Christ is Head of the Church ; and concludes, let the Wife see that she reverence her Husband. And the same in many other Places. But because to be in Subjection, is a Phrase of no certain Signification, (all Inferiors being commanded to be subject to the higher Powers, Children to their Parents, Servants to their Masters, and even Men to one another, as well as Wives to their Husbands) it will be necessary to know, in what Particulars, Wives must be in Subjection to their Husbands. For a Subject cannot obey his King, a Son his Father, nor a Servant his Master, in all Things ; but each Superior has his proper, peculiar Sway, and each Inferior a limited Subjection. There is something that fixes the Bounds of every ones Power, and Obedience : And the Transgressors thereof, become on one side, Tyrants and Usurpers, and on the other disobedient Rebels. And so it is with Wives and Husbands, the one may exercise a Power that belongs not to them, and the other refuse Submission, where 'tis due*

and should be paid. It is certain, Wives owe no Subjection to their Husbands, against the Laws of God or Man. Religion and good Morals claim the first Place in their Obedience. And tho' the Laws and Customs of the Land, are very tender to Women offending in Company of their Husbands, as presuming them under Command, and some kind of Constraint ; yet Religion has no such Consideration, but includes all under Sin, who commit any sinful Actions. No Command or Example of a Husband will excuse a Wife offending God, or doing any Thing immoral. She owes him no Subjection in such Points ; he is himself a Rebel to their common Lord and Master, whilst commanding any such unlawful Action. Where Mens Commands are evidently unreasonable, shamefully indiscreet, unusual and unheard of, infamous, or unbecoming their Age, Credit, Quality, and Condition, they may safely be passed by ; *omitted* rather than *neglected* or *despised*. And as to who shall be Judge in such Case, the Wives should be careful that the Commands they refuse, may be such as will justify them to wise impartial Persons ; so that who *will* be Judge, they may easily excuse their Non-compliance, and condemn the Men who give such Orders. For it will not be enough for Wives to oppose *their* Wills, to the Wills of their Husbands, nor Reasons to Reasons, unless apparently unequal, because in both these Cases they evidently contend for Mastery. The Truth is, Wives never consider, or trouble their Heads about these Things ; so far from enquiring where, and when they must obey, and in what Cases they are at Liberty ;

Liberty; they think themselves always at Liberty, and never in Subjection at all, tho' in the most reasonable Cases; forgetting their Duty and Sex together. They consider not that Subjection and Submission in these Instances, are concerned with Religion and Conscience; and yet they are as certainly commanded by God, as Obedience of Subjects to their Princes, Children to their Parents, and Servants to their Masters. In these Cases, Subjection is thought to concern Religion and Conscience, as obliging such by Virtue of God's Command; and why Subjection to Husbands, should not as much concern the Consciences of Wives, is what they can never give any Reason for, since the Laws of God positively charge it on them?

But because *Subjection*, in this Place and Argument, not only signifies bare Submission to the Will and Pleasure of Husbands, but also includes other Qualifications, such as may make them acceptable to God and Men; these therefore are here to be considered, in treating of the Duty of Wives. And the first mentioned, is a *chaste Conversation, coupled with Fear*. By *Conversation* is meant, the whole Course and Way of living, all the exterior Management and Behaviour; and a *chaste Conversation* requires, not only the Purity of the Heart, but such an outward, innocent, and decent Carriage, as will express that inward Purity. It is what the Husband should see, because he is to be won by it, and gained over; and it must be *coupled with Fear*, because the Fear of God is the surest Preservative of *Chastity* in the Heart; as the Fear of Man,

of Laws, of Infamy, Shame, and ill Report, are a great Security of a chaste and honourable Conversation *without*. There is no room to say much, in Commendation of this great Virtue; Wives well know, that without it, they are no longer such, the Band of Wedlock is immediately dissolved before God, and before Man too, as soon as the Husband demands the Assistance of Law. But this Crime cannot be committed, without the Breach of the most solemn and tremendous Vow and Promise that can be made; it is the Guilt of such a Perjury, as cannot be atoned for in this World, and of such horrible Injustice, as can never be repaired either to Husband or Children. In other Cases, indeed, Perjury may take away a Man's good Name, or Estate; but then some amends may be afterwards made for both by Repentance, his good Name may be recovered by Recantation of what was sworn to his Prejudice; and his Estate may be restored, by Law or Surrender. If the Life of a Father is taken away by Perjury and Injustice, some Compensation may be made to his unhappy Children. But the Perjury and Injustice of an adulterous Wife, are such Offences, as can receive no Reparation or Amendment. A Confession of her Crime to the Party injured, may make him more miserable, and do him farther Injury; and as for Satisfaction, 'tis not in her Power. How hard is it then for such, to make a good and true Repentance! how long and bitter should their Sorrow and Compunction be, since they have disabled themselves from doing any thing besides! And for these Reasons, and on Account of their flexible,

ble, tender Constitutions, none surely in the World can sin with such sensible, and painful Conviction, as false Wives.

Nor is refraining from adulterous Practice *only*, enough to denominate a *Conversation chaste*. The outward Carriage must be honest and inoffensive, void of *Suspicion* as well as *Blame*. And this it will be, if *coupled with Fear*; that is to have a tender Regard to Reputation and good Fame, as well as Fear of offending the Husband. They must *provide Things honest, not only in the Sight of the Lord, but in the Sight of Men*. We are by our good Works to glorify our Father which is in Heaven; we must not only be acceptable to God, but approved of Men. Christians should have their *Conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they might, by their good Works, which they should behold, glorify God in the Day of Visitation*. We are to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things; to have our *Conversation worthy of the Gospel; and to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called, and as becometh Saints; to give no Offence in any Thing, that the Ministry (the Gospel Dispensation) be not blamed*. Again, Tit. ii. 5. *Let Women be discreet, chaste, keepers at Home, good, obedient to their own Husbands, that the Word be not blasphemed; nor they give any Occasion to the Adversary*. That is, for the Enemies of Christianity to reproach that holy Religion; as if all its good Lessons made Men no better, than before; Servants no better Servants, nor Women better Wives, than before they were converted; all which tended to the great Disgrace of Christianity. So that it is not enough,

for a Christian to be indeed virtuous and good, but he must appear so; because a good Example is of great Use, not only to silence the Reproaches, Blasphemies, and evil Speakings, of foolish, ignorant, or malicious People, who on visible Miscarriages, are ready to charge Religion as a useless, insignificant Thing; but for the good Effect and Influence it has on others. For as a bad Example, brings Discredit and Reproach to the Profession; so a good one, does it Honour and Advantage, and insensibly gains on the most obdurate Minds

One of the Motives and Encouragements recommended by St. *Peter* to Wives, to live in a holy, careful, and religious Subjection to their Husbands, is, a good Conversation; because *that if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word, be won, by the Conversation of the Wives, whilst they behold their chaste Conversation coupled with Fear.* It is much the same Advice as St. *Paul* gives, 1 Cor. vii. 16. that if an Unbeliever, either Man or Woman, was married to a Believer, the Christian should not think of parting on that Account, but stay the rather, in Hopes to win, by a kind, good-natured Christian Conversation, the unbelieving Party over to the Faith. *How knowest thou, O Wife, whether thou shalt save thy Husband, or thou, O Man, whether thou shalt save thy Wife?* They both suppose that a virtuous, sober, and religious Example may prevail, when the Word of God is of no Force. And great indeed is the Power of a good Example well managed; it is an Argument always operating, and which a Person cannot help attending to. When

a Man sees his Wife by Virtue of the Christian Doctrine, leading a sober, chaste, religious Life, practising the Commands of Christ, and not only abstaining from Adultery, open Falshood and Abomination ; but also from all Appearance of Evil, her Words and Actions being directed by the Rules of strict and severe Virtue, and living in free Subjection to his Will ; 'tis impossible he should not like the Religion and good Principles which influence her to such Obedience and Virtue. The Power of Christianity having such desirable Effects, he must certainly conclude, it is a most useful and holy Dispensation, a Religion honourable for God, and beneficial to Mankind ; and there is nothing so likely to convert a Man, to any Religion, as when its Principles are just, good, and virtuous. Such an Example will perpetually reproach and disturb him, giving him no Peace, till he comply therewith ; it is a powerful Method in the Hands and Management of a prudent Woman, and will prevail sooner, than all the Reasoning in the World.

And if a sober, chaste, religious Conversation, *coupled with Fear*, that is, with a becoming Carefulness of not offending, and a familiar, easy, free Submission, is the most likely Way to convert an unbelieving Husband to the Faith of Christ ; 'tis also very probable that the same prudent Method, will succeed to win over Christian Husbands, from many idle, sinful Practices, and cure them of many foolish perverse Humours. For unless a Man is brutalized to a great Degree, the meek, quiet, chaste, and sober Conversation

of his Wife, will win and gain on him. Most Men have their Times of thinking and considering ; and when they remember and reflect on the faithful, chaste, religious Carriage and Conversation of their Wives ; that they have not requited their Perjury and Falsehood, as is commonly done, but, under their sensible and wounding Injuries, have behaved so virtuously and well, as not to give them any Jealousy within, nor Shame and Infamy a road, whereby to make the World think they had been ill treated ; a Man must be horribly hard, and of an inflexible ill Nature, whom such Reflection will not soften into Love and Pity. The Remembrance of such Kindness, good Qualities, and prudent Converse, is more likely to effect a Cure, and reduce a wandering Husband, than any Thing besides. This may not only fill him with good *Ideas* of Religion, but prove a Motive to his Conversion, turn his Heart, and bring him to the Ways of Goodness. He may see how reasonable it is for *him* to be as faithful to his Vows, and true to his Engagements, as *she* has been ; and out of a generous and religious Gratitude, he may reform and redeem his past Miscarriages, by a future constant Kindness. It is not indeed certain, that these Methods will reclaim a vicious and faithless Husband, but they are the most likely to do it of any ; and every Wife is obliged to take such Courses, whether they prove effectual or not ; for there must be no Requital in these sinful Instances, the Sin of *one* will never excuse the *others*. Wives must still persist in the Performance of their Duties towards God and Man ; if their chaste and religious Conversation prevails,

prevails, they have gained their Point ; if *not*, they have the Satisfaction of knowing, that they have done their Duty, by taking the most likely Methods to effect what they desired and wanted ; and are thereby excusable both to God and Man, and shall not fail of their Reward. But by a light and idle, wanton and suspicious Carriage, they not only give Offence to sober virtuous People, and encourage vicious impudent Attempters ; but do Religion much hurt, and greatly weaken it in the Minds of their ill-disposed Partners ; who seeing none of its boasted Power and Efficacy, it alienates their Affections, and hardens them in their unlawful Practices. For the most vicious ungodly Husbands that are, would have their Wives even scrupulously Virtuous and Religious, and make the Want of such Qualities, a Pretence for their ill treating them ; and therefore Wives are inexcusable, if they will not thus try to reclaim them, especially when 'tis their Duty so to do, let the Event be what it will.





DISCOURSE VI.

DUTY of WIVES to HUSBANDS.

I PETER iii. 3, 4.

Whose adorning; let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the Sight of God, of great Price.



T. Peter intending that all Women should make good Wives, and good Christians, lays down this general Rule in the first Place, that they must be *in Subjection to their own Husbands*; and then in order to the same good End, He descends to particular Injunctions, of which a very great one was, to have their *Conversation chaste, and coupled with Fear*. These I have already treated on: He then proceeds in the Text to propose other Rules and Instructions, such as will very much forward his Design, of making
Women

Disc. VI. *Duty of Wives, &c.* 85

Women both good Wives and Christians. *First*, negatively, by shewing them, that the Ways of the World, were not such as he would advise, to recommend them to God, or their Husbands. *Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the Hair, and of wearing Gold, or putting on of Apparel:* But *secondly*, affirmatively, he shews what he would advise, and why. *But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is, in the Sight of God, of great Price.* I will first consider his negative Advice, and which is near the same with what St. Paul delivers, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. *That Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shamefacedness and Sobriety; not with broidered Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array, but (which becometh Women professing Godliness) with good Works.* These two being the only remarkable Passages in the *New Testament*, concerning the Dress of Christian Women, and on which they who affect a notorious Plainness, and Simplicity of Apparel, ground their Practice, and condemn others of Pride and Vanity, and of living contrary to the Advice of St. Paul and St. Peter; it may not be amiss to consider their true Import. And I will *first* shew, what is *not* the Meaning of them; and *secondly*, what *is*.

And *First*, neither St. Peter, nor St. Paul, do utterly forbid Women to wear any Gold about them, either in Ear-rings, Cloaths, Lace, or embroidery; or to plait the Hair, or wear Pearls, Jewels, Linnen, Silk, or Woollen Cloaths, that come to much Money, and are *costly*. They are
not

not to be understood in the strict and literal Sense, for these Reasons. *First*, it is not required in the Nature of the Thing; nor *secondly*, by the Way and Manner of Expression; nor *thirdly*, is it the End and Design of the Apostles. And the Patrons of a plain simple Dress, tho' they found their Practice and Opinion of its Necessity, on the literal Sense of these Texts, yet cannot excuse themselves from contradicting the Apostles, if the Linen, Silk, or Woollen, which they wear, cost considerably; for they are as much forbidden *costly Apparel*, as Gold, Pearls, and broidering of the Hair. Not that these People are to be blamed, for their plain Attire, (all being at Liberty in such Things) but then they should not reason for the Necessity of it, from these Texts, much less accuse and condemn of Pride, and sinful Vanity, such as in Appearance go in more gay and costly Cloathing. If they avoid these two Offences, they may do as they please themselves. I will now proceed to shew, that these Advices and Instructions of the Apostles, are not literally to be understood.

And *First*, the Nature of the Thing does not require it. For what greater Evil, or malignity is there in Gold and costly Apparel, than in any other Metal, Stones, or coarser Garments? Whether it be the Wisdom, Folly, or Fancy of People, that has set a greater Value on these Things, than on others is not material; yet certainly there is no greater *Evil* in one, than another; they are all in their own Natures equally Innocent. And tho' they sometimes prove the *Occasions* of great Mischiefs, yet they are never properly

perly the *Causes* of them ; but it is the Passions and Desires of People, who to acquire them, will take Courses, which, in their Consequence, produce mischievous Effects. They are naturally no worse, than Shape and Comeliness in a Tree, or Beauty, Fragrance, and Variety of Form and Colour, in Flowers and Herbs ; all are God's Creatures, and consequently good. But supposing even that their Value and Esteem arise, from the Opinion of the World, and People's Fancies run into a blameable Excess ; yet 'tis not reasonable to think, they are all of them absolutely prohibited, because Men entertain false Notions of, and are deceived in them. For we have as much true Reason to value *these*, as any other material Things. If we can judge of Beauty and Usefulness, they are as beautiful and useful, as any other Parts of God's Creation. But whatever they are in themselves, and however Men may be mistaken, in their Judgments of them, yet it is absolutely necessary, that some Things should be esteemed more excellent than others ; without this, no Trade or Commerce could be carried on. And if the Wisdom of all Ages has centred in this, that such particular Things, should be best and most valued, it is a great Presumption that they *are* truly the most excellent and valuable of the Creation ; also a plain Demonstration, that it is very proper to *account* them so ; because it is absolutely necessary that something should be esteemed *best*, and nothing has ever prevailed above these Things, in civilized Countries. They are as good and innocent as other Things, and there is nothing in the Nature of them,

them, from whence we may conclude, they are absolutely prohibited. Nor,

Secondly, from the Manner of Expression here used, tho' it seems to be absolutely negative, it being so expressed in many other Places of Scripture, as *Matt. vi. 19. Lay not up for yourselves Treasures on Earth, but lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven.* Tho' the Expression is absolutely negative, yet it does not mean to prohibit People from laying up Treasures on Earth, for this the Necessities and Duties of Life require; and without it, there would be no such Thing as Stock and Substance, Trade and Commerce, nor any Provision made for Families and Children. But the Meaning is, that Christians should be more intent on securing their everlasting Happiness, than on the short, perishing Riches of this World; that they should not spend their Time, Care, and Pains in gathering Treasures here, which are subject to so many Changes, and can be enjoy'd but a very short Time; to the Neglect of heavenly Things, in whose Possession there is everlasting Happiness, and in whose Loss there is eternal Misery. God also says, *Matt. ix. 13. I will have Mercy, and not sacrifice*, which cannot be understood of God's absolutely refusing and disliking Sacrifices, they being frequently commanded in the Law of *Moses*, to be constantly and solemnly offer'd to him; but the Meaning is, should they come in Competition, he will have Mercy rather than Sacrifice. So, *Matt. x. 28. Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* It is impossible not to fear such as can kill the Body; but we must not fear the

the one in Comparison with the other, who can make us miserable for ever. Again, *Prov. xx. 13. xxxiii. 4. Love not Sleep, labour not to be rich*; that is, do nothing of that kind excessively; do all Things moderately; be diligent and careful; be not a Slave to Ease and Idleness, nor yet use extream Labour and Pains, for the perishing Goods of this World. Lastly, *Love not the World, nor the Things that are in the World*, 1 John ii. 15. This is impossible to be taken in the literal Sense, for Men cannot help loving themselves, and many Things in the World; but the Meaning is, that Men must not love any Thing in this World comparatively with God, so as not to part with it, if he commands us; so as not to prefer our Obedience, and the Duty we owe him, before all other worldly Things besides; tho' never so useful, advantageous, or delightful to us. Thus it appears, that a Prohibition or Command, may be expressed in general positive Terms, and yet not always to be understood literally, without Exception and Reserve. And therefore, tho' St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* prohibited Women plaited or broidered Hair, Gold, Pearls, and costly Attire, yet they did not mean to prohibit the Use and Ornament of these in general, there being nothing in their Nature evil, but what accidentally becomes so by Abuse. Nor,

Thirdly, is it necessary that these Things should be absolutely forbidden from the Design of the two Apostles, which seems to be *principally* the recommending, what would make Women good Wives and good *Christians*, namely, *good Works*; and *secondarily*, such decent, grave, external Dress,

Dress, as would become those good Works; such as would give no Scandal and Offence, nor minister Temptations to another. But this Design is no way obstructed by a moderate prudent Use of all, or any of these Ornaments; so that there is no Reason to conclude, these Particulars are universally and absolutely forbidden to Women, either from the Nature of the Things, the Manner of Expression, or the End proposed by these two Apostles. I shall now proceed to consider what is forbidden by these Words, which was the *second* Thing proposed. And,

First, we may reasonably conclude, that St. Peter and St. Paul intended to forbid all such Gaiety and Costliness of Attire, as would minister to Pride and Vanity. Whatever tends to this, is certainly here prohibited and condemned. It is not only Gold, Pearls, and costly Attire, that occasion this foolish Vanity of Heart; but any Thing that People so value and esteem, as to think it puts them above their Neighbours. It is not the Richness of the Thing, that is always most esteemed; for if a Thing of lesser Price is more fashionable, 'tis more desired and valued by the Wearer. *Loose and flowing Hair*, if modish, might occasion more Pride and Vanity, than plaiting or brodering it. So that meaner Things, if fashionable and in Use, may certainly occasion as much Pride and Vanity, as more costly Things. And what is said for the Matter and Substance of Attire, is also true for the Manner and Fashion of it; I mean, that no one particular Mode can possibly be forbidden, or prescribed, as what necessarily occasions, or prevents this Pride and Vanity;

nity ; because no particular Fashion, or Dress does this. It is therefore weak to imagine, that any one Fashion is the *proudest* that ever was, for People are alike proud in *all* Fashions, and none would be proud of their Dress, if out of Fashion, unless they wore it in Opposition thereto. What I mean to observe on this Head is, that the Consent in general of most Wearers makes a Dress, or Habit fashionable, and when that prevails, it becomes the Measure and Standard of Decency ; but to conclude, that one Fashion is more proud and sinful than another, argues Weakness of Judgment, or Want of Consideration. Upon the whole then it appears, that the Apostles do not design altogether to forbid Women the Use of Gold, Pearls, or costly Attire, the broidering or plaiting of the Hair, neither from the Nature of the Things, which are indifferent, either innocent or evil, as they are used ; nor from the Manner of Expression, since many other Passages are full as absolute and universal, that must be taken in a restrained and equitable Sense ; nor, *lastly*, from their main Design, which is to inform Women, what are the truest Ornaments and Honours of their Sex ; namely, good Qualities and good Works. That their principal Care should be, to do such Things as will recommend them to God and Man, and make them useful in their Generations ; that whatever Value and Esteem, the inconsiderate Part of Mankind may put on Dress and Attire, yet that there is no real Worth in such Appearances ; that it is indeed necessary to do as is commonly done, but that the Commendation arising thence is not desirable, or any ways bene-

beneficial ; and that there is not the least Reason to be proud and vain on these Accounts.

The *first* Thing therefore meant is, that no Wife should be proud of her Apparel, and that whoever exalts herself, to undue Conceits of her own Worth, or is thereby inclined to scorn and despise another, because not so richly arrayed as herself, offends against the Apostles Rules ; and is obliged to repent and try, whether a meaner Dress will not abate her Haughtiness, and cloath her with Humility, and such other good Qualities and Graces, as become those who profess Godliness. *Secondly*, all such Attire, as serves to Looseness and Immodesty, is here forbidden ; whether designed to serve such wicked Purposes, or that has a natural Tendency thereto. To dress with such Design, is not only blameable, but damnable, without Repentance ; and its not taking Effect will no way excuse or lessen the Guilt, or Punishment. As to such who dress only with Design to appear gracious and lovely in the Sight of People, and to gain Affection and good Will ; whoever would know how far she may innocently dress with this Design, must ask herself, What she thereby intends, and what Use she designs to make of People's Approbation, or Admiration of her ; and according as that is better or worse, so her Dressing and Adorning, will be more or less innocent. And tho' Wives, with Respect to the pleasing their Husbands, should be permitted to take a greater Liberty than others, yet they are prohibited, as well as other Women, such Dress, as, tho' without Design to hurt any one, may have a natural Tendency to Evil, and minister
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Temptations to another. To dress then with a Design of ensnaring weak and sinful Hearts, and to serve immodest Purposes, is most undoubtedly a Sin, whatever may be the Consequence; and to effect an evil End may be a Sin, tho' not intended, because such take the proper and usual Courses to accomplish it. Indeed it is not easy to determine, what Dress or Garb does naturally produce these bad Effects; much depends on the Usages and Customs of Countries, and the Consent of People. But all should carefully avoid such Dress, as either naturally or designedly tends to Immodesty and Looseness in themselves, or that may tempt others to sin.

Thirdly, all such Attire and Dress, as takes up too much Time, may reasonably be presumed to be forbidden, because our Time is given to better Purposes. The Consideration of the great Work that every one has to do, the Uncertainty of the Time we have to perform it in, the daily Diversions and Impediments we meet with from necessary Business, the Corruptions of our Hearts, and the Temptations of the World, have so powerfully affected many People in all Ages; that some have quite abandoned the World, sequestered themselves from all Company and Business, to devote and entirely give themselves up to Prayers, Praise, and Repentance. As these are not hastily to be condemned, so neither are they presently to be imitated; for God having made the Duties and Businesses of Life, the Instances of our Obedience; whilst we are discharging them with Care and Honesty, we are truly serving God, and keeping his Commands. Those who have Re-
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course to Solitude and Contemplation only, think the *Theory* of Virtue is equal to the *Practice* of it, which is certainly a Mistake; for tho' there may be more Pleasure to one's self, in Speculation, than in Action, yet the Practice and Exercise of Virtue is much more beneficial to the rest of Mankind, and better answers the Purposes of Religion, which are, to honour God, and to serve one another. The Use I would make of this Consideration is, that the more thoughtful and considerate People are, about the momentous Work of their Salvation, the more will they lay it to Heart, and spend less Time in trifling, needless Matters. It is certainly unlawful to bestow that Time on dressing, that is due to God, and should be spent in worshipping and serving him, and which is given us on Purpose to secure our everlasting Salvation: Or that which is owing to our Neighbours, Relations, and ourselves, in the several States of Life, and different Respects we have to them all. And tho' a Woman may be constant in her Prayers, Reading, or other spiritual Exercises; yet this is not enough, if she employs those Hours on tricking and adorning herself, which are necessary to discharge well the Office of a good Wife, Parent, or Mistress of a Family. For these are all Duties, that must not be neglected. So that it is a very great Imprudence and Fault in any Woman, to give that Time to Idleness, Vanity, and Dressing, which should be employed in looking after the Concerns of her Husband and Family, her Children and Servants, and is the End and Business of her Relation, as a Wife.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, We may reasonably presume, that St. Peter and St. Paul forbid such Dress, as by its Expence will prevent and hinder People from doing Acts of Charity, which they might otherwise do: Not that all Money expended on Things pleasant and delightful, is ill spent, or ought to have been bestowed on charitable Uses; for that's an Opinion without Truth or Reason, and we may as well say, nothing is lawful but to give Alms. Sometimes the innocent and lawful Pleasures of this Life are necessary to sweeten Men's Cares, to relax their Minds, and to make Life itself go down with some tolerable Relish. It is the *Excess* only of such Things that is blameable, for Extremities are always to be avoided. And thus in the present Case, it is such an expensive, costly Apparel, that disables People from expending any thing on good Uses, which ought to be condemned. When a Woman carries the Fortune of a Family about her, and almost labours under the Weight and Pressure of her Ornaments; this must needs be faulty, because it is doing what, at least, is neither necessary, convenient, nor commanded, before *that* which is excellent, necessary, and their Duty; such as the doing Acts of Charity, and being kind to Relations, according to their several Qualities and Abilities. For since Charity and doing Good is the very End of God's bestowing Riches, and the best Use any can possibly make of them; they must be condemned, that apply not their Riches to this good Use, but extravagantly and unprofitably lay them out on themselves.

Lastly,

Lastly, We may reasonably conclude, the Apostles intended to forbid all such expensive, costly Apparel, as exceeds the Quality and Ability of the Wearer ; because, *1st*, This is an Offence against *Decency*, and that natural becoming Order, which the Wisdom and Custom of all Times and Places have judged convenient, to distinguish one from another, and thereby prevent all Disrespect, Disorder, and Confusion. And tho' this may not be a Sin against God ; yet there is a great Deformity, and natural Indecency in it. *2dly*, It frequently occasions Poverty to the Family ; it most unconscionably exhausts the Gain and Profit of any Calling, when that which should maintain the House, keep the Children, and support the Trade and Credit of Men, is thrown away in gay Appearance, not only to the Shame and Disgrace, but often to the Ruin of Husbands. It breaks the Heart of Industry, to see its Fruits so lavishly, simply, and soon squandered away, by light wanton Fancies. And this frequently tempts Men to become ill Husbands, to contract Debts, and enter into new Engagements, to support the Vanity of such Wives, as will exceed their just Abilities and proper Qualities. It's impossible for any Woman to be a good Wife, without considering this ; and also exceeding wrong for Wives to be always thinking on their *Family*, or *Fortune*, and forget their Husbands Quality and Estate, by which only they ought to govern themselves in these Matters. *3dly*, Because the Occasion of this excessive and costly expensive Gaiety, is Pride at the Bottom. It is, no Doubt, very possible for Persons to be as good

good and humble, under the richest and most costly Attire, as under the most coarse and mean. And this is some Sort of Defence, for those who go according to their State and Quality, that they are not proud and haughty. But when People exceed their Quality and Estate, 'tis impossible to impute such Vanity to any Thing but Pride.

We may therefore reasonably presume, the Apostle intended to forbid the *Christian Women*, *First*, all Pride and Vanity, Self-conceit, Scorn, and Contempt of others. *Secondly*, all such Habits and Fashions, as may serve, designedly or not, to wanton, immodest Purposes, and prove Occasions of Falling. *Thirdly*, all such Dressing, as consumes that Time, which is due to God, their Neighbours, and themselves, and that hinders them from carefully and soberly discharging all the Duties they owe, in their several Relations, to Husbands, Children, and Servants. *Fourthly*, all such expensive Habits, as disable them from doing Good in their Generation, and from exercising such Acts of Charity, as they otherwise would perform, were it not for their lavish and extravagant Expences. And, *lastly*, all such costly Dress and Habit, as are above their Qualities and Abilities. All these are certainly forbidden, because whoever act thus, cannot be good Wives, nor good *Christians*; and such as keep within these Bounds, need not fear offending, either in the Matter, or Manner of their Dress. There are indeed some Exceptions and Allowances to be made, as to each Particular observed; but a little Understanding, with a great deal of Sincerity

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and good Intention, will sufficiently and safely direct any herein. Let none be over scrupulous themselves, nor hasty in censuring others. I shall conclude with a few Considerations concerning Dress and Habits. And,

First, Tho' these Rules are particularly directed, and relate to *Women*, yet the *Men* are also concerned therein. The Reason of the Injunction extends to them, and they are so much the more to blame, than *Women*, by how much they are more reasonable and superior to *Women*. The Apostles undoubtedly forbid *Men*, whatever is reasonable and fit to be forbidden *Women*; and therefore Pride and Vanity, on Account of Garb and Dress; all vicious loose Designs; all intolerable Waste of Time; all extravagant Expence, and all indecent Habit, unbecoming their Condition and Estate, are as much prohibited to *Men*, as *Women*, by the Scriptures, and are truly more shameful and contemptible in them. *Secondly*, All other *Women* are concerned, as well as *Wives*, in these Injunctions; for the main Design of the Apostles, being to make *Women* good *Wives* and good *Christians*, the Observance of their Rules is sure to make them good *Christians*, which will dispose and fit them to be good *Wives*, against the Time comes. *Thirdly*, There is something in Habit peculiarly decent, proper, and becoming to every Age and Quality, which ought to be observed. The Customs of all wise civilized Nations, in Conformity to Nature and good Reason, have always made a Difference between the Habits of old and young Persons, and set a Mark of Lightness on such, as would not

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know when they grew old, tho' every one saw it. This Humour, tho' not sinful, is exceeding vain, weak, and against the Rules of Reason. The older People grow, the more they should see the Emptiness and Vanity of what they formerly delighted in; and refuse *then*, what they before innocently used. For ancient People to mind these silly Things, is to forget the Rules of Decency, and neglect the Warning God and Nature give them.

Lastly, 'Tis a great Reproach to the Wisdom, Sobriety, and Consideration of Men, to see Women sure of gaining their Designs and Ends on them, by the little Arts they use in dressing and adorning themselves. They in Effect say, These wise and noble Creatures (Men) who are so much our Masters by Design of Nature, Custom, and God's Commands, and so superior in Abilities of Mind and Body, are yet ensnared by little Finesses and Deceits, and caught by silly fallacious Baits. And indeed Men deserve this scornful Imposition, who look no farther than Appearances, and are governed by their Fancies, not their Judgments or Understanding. The Qualities then, which should recommend People to one another, who are always to live together, ought to be such as will last and continue with them; not such as will please only for a little while, but what will bear Deliberation before, and a satisfactory Reflection afterwards. *Fancy* is a mere Weathercock, that varies on every Turn and little Accident, and is too uncertain to build on it the Hopes of being happy. The only wise Way, therefore, is to provide such

Qualifications, as, when People are sober, thoughtful, and considerate, they will earnestly desire and value ; such as will not only recommend them at first to Favour and Good-liking, but what will also keep them in Esteem all their Life-time. This is the sure Way to make their Condition happy. But then these good Qualifications are not the beautifying and adorning themselves with Gold, Pearls, and plaited Hair, the dressing loosely and immodestly, the devoting most of their Time and Estates to appear much above their Fortune and Quality. No, these Things will never recommend them to religious, wise, and sober People ; it is only such good Qualities and Virtues, as the Scriptures describe and enjoin to them, that can recommend them to the Favour of God and Man.





DISCOURSE VII.

DUTY of WIVES to HUSBANDS.

I PETER iii. 4.

But let it be the bidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is, in the Sight of God, of great Price.



HAVING considered at large, the negative Advice of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, as to what Sort of Ornaments they would *not* have Women solicitous about ; I shall now discourse of their affirmative and positive Injunctions, concerning the Ornaments they are *desirous* Women should be adorned with. *Let it be the bidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is, in the Sight of God, of great Price.* In the Scriptures, Man is distinguished by the *outward* and *inward* Man, which generally signifies the *Body* and

Mind; the first being attributed to the *Body*, the latter to the *Mind*. And therefore the Heart of every one, that lies hidden, is what the Apostles would have beautified and adorned. They would have the *Minds* of *Christian Women* filled with good Principles, their Hearts stored with such Qualities and Virtues, as are truly their Grace and Ornament, and to appear as lovely and desirable, as all exterior Dress can make their Bodies; and this Adorning is to be, in that *which is not corruptible*. Gold, Pearls, and costly rich Apparel, are all of them perishable Things, that corrupt, consume, and wear away; Things that are eaten up with Rust and Moth, subject to Thieves, and many Accidents. The Things that serve the Body, either for Use or Ornament, are, like the Body, *corruptible* and *wasting*; but the Mind, being immaterial and immortal, requires Ornaments suited and proper to it: Amongst which, are a *meek* and *quiet*, good and gentle *Temper*; a lowly modest Opinion of themselves, together with a silent, easy, and contented Mind, under their Condition. And because those Ornaments are most valued, that are most costly, therefore, the more to recommend this meek and quiet Spirit, the Apostle adds, that it is *in the Sight of God of great Price*; commended, approved, and highly valued by him. The Apostle's Meaning then, is this, ' That
' the surest Way for *Christian Women*, to re-
' commend themselves to God, and their Hus-
' bands, is to stock themselves with such Virtues,
' good Qualities, and inward Accomplishments,
' as are lasting, and will be of greatest Use and
' Service,

‘ Service, both here and hereafter.’ This will appear, from considering the Particulars enjoined.

First, the *hidden Man of the Heart*, that is, the *Mind*, is to be adorned. The Mind or Soul, is the superior and better Part of Man, as being that which is to govern the other, and makes him a reasonable religious Creature, which is the greatest Privilege and Honour he is capable of enjoying; and therefore certainly deserves to be equally taken Care of, cultivated, and improved with the Body. To be solicitous in setting out the Body to Advantage, and neglect cultivating the Mind, is as if a Man should be at great Expence to build the Outside of a House exceeding fine and stately, and shew no Regard to Contrivance, Beauty, or Convenience within, nor intending for it any Furniture: Every one would blame such a Man, for neglecting what was most serviceable and convenient, only to appear well to Strangers. Nor are they wiser, or less to be condemned, who spend their Time and Pains to appear externally fine and handsome, while the Mind is suffered to lie waste, wild, and unimproved. However well the Body may be framed by Nature; however fine and handsome it may appear; yet if the Mind is weak or silly, the first Motion shews it; such can no sooner speak, but their Defects are discerned. The Beauty and Grace, even of all exterior Gesture and Action, proceed from the Mind; so that no Care or Pains can be too great about this first Mover, this mighty Spring, which communicates Life and Motion to all the rest.

The Mind, both of Men and Women, is to be improved by reading, thinking, and considering. People attain good Qualities of the Mind, as they do several Habits of the Body, by Use, Custom, and taking proper Methods. And thus all may become virtuous and religious, wise and discreet. On due Enquiry, both will find themselves with Powers and Faculties, different *from*, and superior *to*, all other Creatures. That they can remember past Things, consider what is present, and by comparing them one with another, can determine what to do for the future; that by searching into their own Original, they may discover, that their Species were not from all Eternity, but created in Time, by a Being necessarily existing itself, and voluntary producing every Thing else. They will find, this powerful Being has created them with so many Wants, as to make them depend on him for Supply, which of Necessity brings them to worship him by *Prayer*; and he confers so many Blessings and good Things on them, that natural Gratitude excites them to return him Thanks and Praise: By which they must evidently see, that God hath made and designed them, to be *religious* Creatures, by giving them Abilities and Powers to worship and serve him by Prayer and Praise, which are denied to all other Creatures but Mankind. Thus, by a little easy thinking and considering, the Mind is filled with the Knowledge and Belief of God, the good and powerful Author of *it*, and all Things else; and fully convinced of the Necessity of worshiping and serving him, and that every Man and Woman in
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the World, is by God designed to be a reasonable, and consequently a religious Creature. This is the first Improvement of the Mind.

The next, concerns the Exercise of Virtue. Without Religion none will be virtuous; but when that good Foundation is once laid, the other easily follows. When we consider God in all his Excellencies and adorable Perfections, we shall find that he is, *in himself*, eternal, almighty, all-wise, pure and holy; and with *respect to us* and all his Creatures, just, righteous, merciful, and good. And since these are the Perfections of the most perfect Being, we conclude, that the nearer *we* approach to these Perfections, the more perfect we are, and the more esteemed, and valued by him. On these, the reasonable Desire of being virtuous, is originally founded; I mean, the Desire of being as excellent and perfect as our Nature is capable; and the Desire of rendering ourselves most acceptable to God, who will reward such as endeavour to please him. We are excited to be pure, holy, chaste, and clean, and to preserve ourselves spotless and undefiled, because such Sanctity and Innocence is greatly perfective of our Nature; but Impurity sinks us below ourselves, and makes us like the Beasts that have no Understanding. We also know that this heavenly Virtue will be recompensed by God, with the most pure, sincere, and undisturbed Pleasures in Heaven, the Seat of Holiness. We are excited to be just and righteous in all our Dealings, because we know it is so excellent and reasonable in itself, so becoming and necessary for us, that to

depart from it, is in a manner to disclaim all farther Conversation with Mankind.

There is nothing more natural, than that every one should in the first Place, consult his own Ease and Benefit. But because what belongs to every one, is really no Privilege to any one ; therefore each should in some Cases, depart from his natural Right, and submit to Rules that are impartial, and which do equally favour *all* ; amongst which, none is more agreeable to Reason and Religion, to deal with others, as we should think it just, for them to deal with us. Every one sees the Reasonableness of this Rule, and the Necessity of observing it, to the Security both of our *Being*, and of all we have. The being just and righteous, gives us Preheminence and Superiority above all that neglect it, and also secures to us the Favour of God. For the same Reason it is, that we are excited to be compassionate and good ; because the shewing Pity and Kindness, to such as stand in need of our Assistance, is undoubtedly an Excellence, and great Perfection of our Nature. To pardon such as have offended us, and who are not only liable to our Displeasure, but Punishment ; to feed the Hungry, cloath the Naked, visit the Sick and Prisoners, comfort the Distressed, right the Injured and Oppressed, and to do any kind of Good ; all these naturally give Men Power and Superiority. The Benefactor will be always uppermost, in the Praise, Honour, and Esteem of all that see and know ; as well as of those who feel his Goodness. And we are moved to all this, by considering that by doing Good and shewing Mercy, we most resemble our heavenly Father,
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the Author and Giver of all good Things, who bestows his Favours and Blessings on Men, that they may do Good to one another, and be themselves a Blessing to their Generation; and hath promised most amply to recompense and reward all such. So that it is very evident, the Desire of being as excellent and perfect as we can, and of rendering ourselves acceptable to God, in Hopes of being favoured by him here, and recompensed by him hereafter, are the Bottom and Foundation, on which the Desire of being virtuous is built: Which was the second Thing whereby the Mind is to be improved.

The *third* Improvement is Wisdom and Discretion; by which I mean, not only the Knowledge of being religious, and exercising Virtue with Advantage, but also an Ability of behaving prudently and decently on all Occasions. It is possible to be religious and virtuous without Discretion; but neither Virtue nor Religion is promoted by indiscreet People. Extravagant Zeal, indiscreet Devotion, and indecent Gestures, are so far from promoting and inviting others to Religion, that they give Occasion of Pity to the Wise and Good, Matter of Offence and Trouble to the Weak, and of Scorn and Mockery to the Light and Profane; but a sober, unaffected, grave, and discreet Deportment of Voice and Gesture in publick Worship, is not only handsome and becoming, but insensibly provokes the Zeal of others to Imitation, and excites in them religious and devout Thoughts. And so it is with the Exercise of all Virtues; which lose much of their Efficacy and Power, for Want of prudent and discreet

discreet Conduct. The Work and Business of Discretion, is to attain our End, by Means not only just and righteous in themselves, but also well approved of by others; to do what ought to be done, in the most becoming and acceptable Manner. Thus Clemency and Lenity may be so indiscreetly and unseasonably exercised, as to appear more like a Disregard to Justice, and an Encouragement to Villany, than an Effect of Mercy and Compassion. The Truth is, without Discretion, we cannot converse well, nor do any Thing acceptably; it is what gives Grace and Ornament to all we say and do, and is highly necessary in Matters both of great and less Moment. If our Conduct is prudent and discreet, the less Offences we shall commit, and the more useful will be our Conversation and Behaviour. This I the rather insist on, because probably more domestick Evils, and Family Uneasinesses arise from Want of Discretion, than from the Want of Virtue or Religion; and therefore I added Wisdom and Discretion, to Virtue and Religion, as what was necessary to cultivate and improve the Mind. For since the Apostles intended, that *Christian Women* should be good *Wives*, as well as virtuous and religious, and that each is their Duty; it is convenient to urge the providing such Qualities, as are necessary thereto; but without a competent Share of Prudence and Discretion, it is impossible for Women to make good Wives, good Mothers, or Mistresses of Families.

The next Ornament of the Mind is, its being that *which is not corruptible*. Whatever we adorn the *Body* with, is corruptible, and wears with Time; all its Beauty is short and perishing. There are many Diseases, and other Accidents, that will quite destroy this Creature of Imagination; a few Years shall so alter the fairest Face, as that an absent Friend, when he returns, shall hardly know it. But the *Mind*, when cultivated and improved, sufficiently answers all our Care, Time, and Pains. It depends not on Humour and Fancy, whether Religion, Virtue, and Discretion, will find Favour and Acceptance, because their Force is irresistible. The most Vicious would have their Mothers, Wives, Children, and other Relations, religious, virtuous, and discreet, rather than beautiful. And therefore 'tis the settled Judgment of Mankind, that these are the best, truest, and most lasting Ornaments of Women. Indeed, when Beauty joins these good Qualities, they give a mutual Lustre, and Advantage to each other. But tho' Beauty, Wit, Birth, Quality, and fine Attire, may attract the Eyes and Admiration of People, yet 'tis Virtue and Religion, that only gains Esteem and secret Veneration. *Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain, but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.* Favour and Beauty, vain and deceitful, ensnaring and corrupting as they are, have their Praise; but they who fear the Lord in Wisdom and Virtue, are praised, honoured, and esteemed, in Earnest and with Sincerity. For these Ornaments and Beauties of the Mind will remain, when other
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Things fail and are no more. The Time will shortly come, when they who have mispent their Life in idle and unprofitable Exercises, tho' not directly sinful ; or, who have neglected to improve their better Part, to dress and adorn their Souls, and cloath them with Virtue and good Works ; shall see and lament the Folly of their Choice, and find themselves standing naked and defenceless before the Throne of God, to give an Account of their past Lives. And then they who have been holy and religious, constant and fervent in their Prayers and Praises, frequent in reading the Scriptures and good Books, in meditating on the Promises and Threats therein declared ; and who have been also careful to be rich in good Works, busily and constantly employed in the Exercise of Virtue and a good Life, shall find the Advantage of having thus improved their Time, their Talents, and Abilities. For they will then see, that *This* was trimming their Lamps, and living in a constant Expectation of the Bridegroom's Coming ; that *this* was the Adorning of the *hidden Man of the Heart*, in *that which was not corruptible*, and what they shall soon find to be, *in the Sight of God, of great Price.*

I now proceed to consider, what is meant by the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, which St. Peter says, is in the *Sight of God, of great Price.* A meek and quiet Spirit naturally signifies, a soft and gentle Temper, a peaceful, calm, and patient Mind ; in Opposition to Anger, Pride, Impatience, and restless Discontent. Such a Temper is the greatest Happiness ; it makes us
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easy to ourselves and others. The Troubles and Misfortunes of Life, are more or less uneasy and afflicting, according as Men's Minds are prepared for them. The same Evil that oppresses and overwhelms one Man, makes but little Impression on another. A meek and quiet Spirit is a great Advantage, and delivers such from many Sufferings, to which angry, hasty, and impatient People are subject; and is therefore the most desirable Temper of any. But it must be acknowledged, that the Seeds and Principles of all our Passions and Humours, are born into the World with us, and that there is generally a Predominancy of some one Humour, which from our Infancy bears sway above the rest, to denominate a Person so *tempered*. And 'tis certain, this mechanical Propensity of Nature, is not by any Care or Pains, Art or Diligence, to be quite extinguished in Education; for there will be ever a Tendency and Byass to that Side, as all Men feel. But 'tis as sure, that Care, Pains, Art, Diligence, Time, and Use, will go a great Way to change and alter any Temper; Use being a second Nature. All have it in their Power to change their Tempers, as far as God requires and enables them by Reason and Use to do it. Thus St. *Peter* exhorts Women not to put off their natural Temper, and presently assume a new one; but so to govern themselves, as to be meek and quiet on all Occasions, and by Reason and Consideration, to refrain from all Bitterness, Impatience, and Clamour. In the Management of their domestic Concerns, many cross perverse Accidents and Disappointments, Provocations and severe Trials

Trials will happen ; and if they do not arm themselves with a patient prudent Spirit, their Sufferings will thereby be greatly enhanced : Not that they are to be insensible and stupid under what befalls them, but to exercise their Reason and best Abilities, that they may do nothing which misbecomes them. This will evidence their Obedience, Patience, and Discretion. And they are also to consider, that Noise and Contention generally make Things worse, and not better ; that the Folly and Perverseness of Men are not cured, nor unlucky Accidents remedied, by Fury and Impatience : But little Things, by an indiscreet, hasty Management, often occasion great Mischief. In all Contentions with their Husbands, the Event generally proves, that nothing could be more their Wisdom and Interest, than a meek and quiet Spirit.

St. *Peter* enforces his Advice, by telling Wives they must be in *Subjection to their own Husbands, even as Sara obeyed Abraham, by calling him Lord.* So that a meek and quiet Spirit imports, the being in Subjection to their Husbands ; the obeying them in Things reasonable ; the using such civil and respectful Terms, as *Sara*, their great Example, did to *Abraham*. *Sara* indeed had often Occasion to exercise a great deal of Patience and Submission. She had such Confidence in *Abraham*, as to leave her native Country, her Kindred, and Father's House, to follow him into a strange Land. Another Instance of her mighty Patience and Submission, was the yielding up her only Son to his Father's Disposal, who was commanded, and resolved to offer him up a Sacrifice.

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This she did, not without the greatest Sorrow and Reluctance. A Child of so many Promises on God's Part, of much Expectation and Desire on her's, and the only Child of her old Age, must needs be dear beyond Expression. She struggled with Difficulties therefore, that tender Mothers *only* can be sensible of.

Indeed, she was not so exemplary to her Maid, who insolently behaved, under her Husband's Favour; but used her cruelly, and drove her to great Extremity.

This Case leads me to consider, how a Woman should behave, when her Husband wanders from her Bed; and how far she ought to exercise a meek and quiet Spirit under such ill Usage. Whatever Commands were given to the *Jews* in Respect of Divorce, and of their being stoned to Death for Adultery, do only concern them. As for the Folly, or Indecency of cohabiting together afterwards, there are Considerations that may make it accidentally and sometimes unlawful so to live; but there is no divine Command, nor any natural Turpitude or Uncleaness in it, that shews it unlawful for the innocent Party still to continue with the false and guilty one. It is certainly lawful for the Innocent and Injured to be patient, and to forgive, love, and live with, if they can, those that have wronged them. And if this be true of Men, with Respect to faithless Women, it is also true of Women, as to false, adulterous Husbands; who are undoubtedly at Liberty, by the Laws of God, to live and cohabit with them. But as they are at Liberty to do this, so are they likewise at Liberty, by the Reason of God's Law, to
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forbear all Commerce with them. The Band that tied them is dissolved and broken; and the Husband, without her Consent, has in that Respect no farther Right to her. In Truth the innocent Wife is neither bound to forsake her adulterous Husband, nor yet to continue with him. He hath set her free, and she may do as she will. But if she again cohabit, and live with her Husband as usual, she is presumed to have forgiven his Sin; and his former Trespas will be no just Reason for her to leave him, when she will. But new Transgressions give her new Liberty; she may endure his Falshood as long as she pleases, but is not obliged to bear it for ever. Here therefore is Room for her Religion and Discretion. She is, no Doubt, bound to convert her Husband from his evil Ways, by all probable Methods; but she is not obliged to hurt herself for his Sake. If by soft and gentle Admonitions, or sharp and quick Reproaches, she can bring him to a Sense of his injurious Usage, and occasion his Repentance and Amendment, she certainly ought to do it. But if she is assured his Humour is such, as that he cannot be spoke to, but the discovering his wicked Folly will harden him in his Sin, or provoke him to use her cruelly, she is not then obliged to endeavour to reclaim him. For no Man can be so ignorant, as not to know, he must not violate the Marriage-bed. The Connivance of a Wife, at the stolen Pleasures of her Husband, should not be thought countenancing of Sin, but considered as an Act of strong Necessity, and to avoid some greater Evil. A Wife may innocently permit, what she cannot prevent; she may endure her Husband's
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open Falshood and Adultery, without Sin or Blame, if she cannot hinder him. Neither Religion nor Discretion prohibit an innocent virtuous Woman to live with a false and wicked Husband; but in such a Case, Wives have the greatest Need of a *meek and quiet Spirit*. When Injuries and Provocations of so quick a Nature, are done to one of a wicked and hasty Disposition, they generally make an everlasting Breach, and cut off all Hopes of Reconcilement. But nothing so wins on the obstinate, and melts the most obdurate Minds, as soft and gentle Usage; even Silence, when it shews Submission, and not Sullessness, will sooner persuade, than angry Arguments produced in Opposition. Nothing is so likely to prevail on a false Husband, as a meek and quiet Spirit, a patient and discreet Submission under those heavy Injuries. There is indeed no living for a Wife, without a tolerable Portion of this meek and quiet Spirit. The Folly and Wickedness of Men, and other unlucky Accidents, do furnish so many Occasions for the Exercise of Patience and Submission, that if a Wife will not prepare herself against them, she must never expect to live with any Peace or Comfort.

St. *Peter* also uses the Example of *Sara*, in calling her Husband *Lord*, to teach Women to profess their Subjection, and acknowledge the Superiority of their Husbands. Civil and respectful Terms become all People, especially Wives. These are some of the Uses, that Wives may make of *Sara's* Example; and the sooner to dispose them to get a meek and quiet Spirit, the Apostle says, it is an *Ornament*. And indeed,

indeed, a meek and quiet Spirit is a great Ornament to Wives, it sets them off to great Advantage, recommends them to the Favour and Esteem of all that know and converse with them, and sensibly engages the Affections of their Husbands; and this, in the Opinion of all wise, good, and virtuous People, is what well becomes them, as being truly a Beauty of the Mind.

Lastly, It is, *in the Sight of God, of great Price*. The Apostle seems to hope he may recommend a meek and quiet Spirit, by saying it is of *great Price*, highly esteemed by God. And it really is so; because it is acting according to Reason, and at the same Time obeying God's Commands. Reason is the Guide that God hath given every Man, to conduct him in his Course of living; and when we act according to good Reason, we answer the End of our Creation; and it is always pleasing to our Great Creator, to see the Work of his Hands prosper. Now to be meek and quiet under Injuries and hard Usage, that can neither be avoided, nor removed, is acting with Reason. 'Tis making the best of a bad Business, and endeavouring to be easy under Sufferings. Injuries, Crosses, and hard Usage, are not so oppressive to meek and quiet Spirits, as to violent and furious Tempers; and therefore 'tis most wise and reasonable for all to be as calm and gentle as they can, and to break the Force of their Misfortunes by Patience and Submission. *Wild Birds* beat themselves to pieces, in the same Cage that tame ones sit and sing. Wives that have the hardest Fortune, seldom mend it by Contention, Clamour, and Impatience. It
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is then the Wisdom of every Wife, to get this meek and quiet Spirit, in order to her Ease and Happiness ; for which Reason it is also commanded by God. For God designing nothing but the Happiness of all his Creatures, commands them every Thing that may procure it ; and whatever he commands, if rightly pursued, will conduce thereto. This is plain, of a meek and quiet Spirit. There are so many accidental and designed Provocations to Anger and Impatience, that People would be extreamly miserable, did not God enjoin them to prepare their Minds to bear them quietly and meekly, when they happen ; and therefore 'tis in Kindness to us, that he lays these Commands on us. And because he is delighted in our Benefit, Ease, and Happiness, therefore he is pleased with our Compliance and Obedience, and which makes a meek and quiet Spirit to be in his Sight of great Price. Nor does his Goodness and Benignity end *here* ; his Aim is also our eternal Good. The happier our Obedience to his Commands makes us in this World, the greater Felicity shall we enjoy in the next. The Commands that carry their Reward with them, whilst we obey them, have also a Reward annexed by Promise to them, in the other Life. And this is a great Encouragement to set about our Duty in these Particulars. A meek and quiet Spirit, is not only in itself an excellent Quality, but is also in the Sight of God of great Price, and which will be amply recompensed with everlasting Rest, Peace, and Quiet, in the World to come.



DISCOURSE VIII.

DUTY of HUSBANDS to WIVES.

COL. iii. 19.

Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter against them.



HAVE already in general observed, that all Duties and Obligations to Love and Service of any Sort, arise either from the Sense and Remembrance of Benefits and Favours received; or from the Hope and reasonable Expectation of *some* that are to come: And that this is the Foundation of our Obligation to pray to, or praise, even God himself; since it is for Blessings *only*, that we praise and pray to him. So that the great Creator has no other Right or Title to the Love, Honour, Worship, or Service of his Creatures, than what his Benefits or Favours, bestowed and promised, give him. It is for Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life, and for the Hopes and Promises of another, that we are bound to
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Disc. VIII. *Duty of Husbands, &c.* 119

bles and worship God. Our Duty to him is not founded on his inward Excellence, his glorious and adorable Perfections, but on his Mercy and Benignity, his Goodness and Loving-kindness shewn on all Occasions *to us*, and evermore expected *by us*. *We love God, because he first loved us, and gave his only begotten Son for us.* And if this is the Case between the Creator and the Creature, it is certainly more so in the Relations one Creature has to another. It is impossible for one of *them* to have any Obligation to another, either to shew Love, or do Service, but it must arise from Gratitude and Thankfulness for some Good received, or from the Hope and Prospect of some Good to be conferred. All Duties of Mankind do mutually infer one another. The Duty of a Subject to his Prince infers the Prince's Duty to his Subject; that is, something, call it what you will, he owes his Subject. *He must lay some Obligation or other on him, or he can ask no Duty from him.* Thus I have shewn it is, in the Relation of Parent and Child, there is an Obligation laid by one, as the Foundation of the other's Duty. And tho' *these* are made Duties by Command of God, yet they are truly Duties in Nature and Reason, antecedently to any Laws or Commands of God; and are enforced by God's Command, because they are in themselves reasonable, fit, and necessary to be observed, for the Good and Quiet of Mankind. God has laid no Obligations on any one, to love and serve another, but for the Sake of some Equivalent to be received at the other's Hands.

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And indeed there is no Relation commanded by God to discharge its Duty to any Correlative, but the other is also commanded to do his Part. Princes are as much obliged to discharge their Office to their Subjects, as Subjects are to their Princes; and Parents are as certainly bound to do their Part and Office to their Children, as Children are to their Parents. The Duty of Princes and Parents is different, no Doubt, from that of Subjects and Children; but the Duty of one is as much a Duty, as is that of the other, each is mutual and reciprocal. And since each Party is, by Nature and Reason, equally obliged to perform its Duty, and equally commanded by God to do so; it is very strange to see one Side *only* looking for, and expecting the Performance of Duty from the other, without discharging its own Part. And yet this is generally the Case on the Side of *Superiors*. Thus Princes, Parents, Masters, and Governors, remember *only* the Reasons and Commands, that give them Power and Authority to exact Obedience, Love, and Service to them; but too often *forget* the Reasons and Commands, that oblige themselves to discharge their several Obligations to their Subjects, Children, and Servants, which is the very Reason and Foundation of the others Duty. And tho' they frequently dispense with themselves, against both Reason and Command, yet they think it very hard and unjust, that their Correlatives should at any Time neglect to perform their several Duties to *them*. And this is too often the Case with many Husbands, who are full of Dominion, morosely imperious, sometimes cruel and tyrannical, ever remembering the Sub-
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mission, Duty, Honour, and Obedience, that their Wives are tied by Reason and God's Command to pay them; but seldom or never thinking of what they owe their Wives, by the same Reason, and God's Commands. St. Paul here makes no Difference, but having said *Wives submit yourselves to your Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord*; he adds in the Words of the Text, *Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter against them*. Leaving it as much a Duty on Husbands to love their Wives, as on the Wives to submit to their Husbands. And indeed it is so wisely ordered by God, that whoever obeys his Commands, in discharging the Duty of his Relation, takes the surest Method to receive what is due to him, from his Correlative. A good Prince is most likely to find good and obedient Subjects, and good obedient Subjects will most likely engage a Prince to be good, affectionate, and careful of his Subjects. And so good and careful Parents and Masters are most likely to make, or find, the most obedient, diligent, and faithful Children and Servants; and dutiful obedient Children are most likely to secure the Care and Affection of Parents; and the most diligent, and honest Servants, are most likely to find their Masters kindest, and most careful of them; so that by discharging every one his Duty, the World in general would be happy, and each Particular be easy in their Station and Relation: And this is the Foundation of that common Saying, which is also true and reasonable, that good Husbands make good Wives, and good Wives good Husbands; that is, nothing is so likely to engage

one Partner to perform his Duty, as the other's performing *theirs*. And would Husbands have good, affectionate, obedient, careful, and faithful Wives, let them follow the Dictates of Reason, and the Commands of God, *to love them, and not to be bitter against them*. In the first place I will consider what is meant by *Husbands loving their Wives*; and in the second, what it is *not to be bitter against them*.

There is a Love peculiar to every Relation, that a Man stands in by Nature, or can contract by Choice, and which is truly distinct from every other Affection. Thus there is a Love of Honour and Esteem due to Virtue, Excellence, and Perfection; this Love is paid to Princes, great and brave People, of all Sorts, and to our Superiors. There is also a Love of *Friendship*, due to Merit and good Qualities, either real or imaginary, generally paid to our Equals. There is also a Love of natural Relations, different from the former, which insensibly grows up with us, from our Infancy. And the mutual Love of Marriage is distinct from all the rest; so that we are obliged to pay that Love and Affection to each Relation, as is respectively due to them. The Love of Husbands consists, *First*, in being kindly affectioned to their Persons. *Secondly*, in being faithful to their Vows. *Thirdly*, in taking care of, and making all due Provision for them.

First, in being kindly affectioned to their Persons; this is properly *Love*, and so essentially necessary to the making Marriage easy and happy, that nothing else can do it. Indeed, Religion, Virtue, Discretion, and good Qualities; Birth, Education,

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Education, Fortune, and Estate, are all to be consider'd in their several Measures and Degrees, to make a married Life truly and lastingly happy. But still without Love, and liking the Person, there will be no true and lasting Happiness. It is not Honour, Respect, nor perhaps Esteem, that will make Wives happy, but a Tenderness of Affection, which they had rather have, than all Things else ; and without which, the rest are vain Formality, insipid Courtship, a Sacrifice without a Heart, and meer Hypocrisy. Virtue, good Qualities, and Fortune, are very desirable, of great Use and Service, especially as they recommend the *Person* to Favour and Acceptance ; but if they do not effect that, they contribute very little to make a married Life happy. I would not be understood to recommend *only*, a Face, or Shape, or to mean, that no one ought to marry without Form or Beauty ; but that none should marry another, where something does not recommend the *Person* to Favour, Approbation, and Acceptance. Affections being under the Dominion of Fancy, the Choice is innocently governed, and directed by Imagination ; and whatever any one thinks beautiful and comely, graceful and taking, is certainly so to such, whatever it is to others. Whoever therefore marries, without this fanciful Affection in some degree, can never make a Partner happy ; because it is *that*, in which Happiness is chiefly placed, and without which none can be happy.

Many Men might indeed be happy in the good Qualities, Virtue, and Discretion of their Wives, who yet are otherwise, for want of this Affection

of the Heart, by which the rest are lost. This Affection will supply many Defects, make amends for many Failings, cover many Faults, and render all domestic Evils and Inconveniences lighter and easier; so that a Man of Wisdom and Discretion, will in Kindness to himself, be careful not to marry, where he cannot literally comply with God's Command to Husbands, *to love their Wives*. The Love of all other Relations may be shewn without this inward and sincere Affection to the Person; as that between Parents and Children, Brothers and Sisters, Friends and Acquaintance, Masters and Servants, Superiors and Inferiors; each may discharge their several Duties to one another, in Acts of Kindness suitable to each Relation, yet may, (and perhaps without Blame) not truly love their Persons. But *this* Relation calls for personal Love and Tenderness, and is not otherwise satisfied, with all the Expressions of Love and Kindness that can be shewn. It must be secure of the Heart and Principle, or else it languishes and dies. In a Word, it is a vain thing for any Man to marry with hopes of being happy, and at ease himself, or making his Partner so, without some liking of her Person; and therefore whoever is religious, and intends to lead a virtuous and sober Life, will never suffer any Consideration whatever, to induce him to marry, where there is an Aversion, or great Indifference to a Person, or at least a great Probability of not loving.

The Peace and Acquiescence of the Mind is to be preferred to all other Considerations whatever. This a Man can hardly have, who is not easy at home,

home, and which is impossible, if he constantly converses with one whom he hates, or despises. Fortune, Alliance, or such other Convenience, will never make Men Compensation and Amends, nor procure that Ease and Quiet, which mutual Love and Tenderneſs will give. Men and Women by Experience know, they may be very miſerable and diſcontented in the miſt of Plenty, and that Kindneſs and Affection of Heart, can only make a great Fortune eaſy and uſeful. None therefore can answer it, to God or Man, who marries where he cannot love; for God's Command could never intend a Man ſhould marry whom he does not love. A Man is not obliged to marry, but he ought to love when married, or not to marry if he cannot love. Therefore the contracting of Children when young, and incapable of knowing what their Partners are, or ſhall be, is often of evil Conſequence, as to the future Peace and Happineſs of their Life, unleſs mutual Love enſues. This Practice indeed aims at ſecuring an Eſtate and Fortune, but it is better omitted, becauſe the attaining that End is not the principal Deſign of Marriage. By ſuch imprudent Choices, many of great Degree and Rank, are more miſerable than their Inferiors. Reſpect is generally had to nothing but Birth, Fortune, and Alliance, without regard to Perſon, Shape, Virtue, good Qualities, and other Endowments proper to engage the Affections; and hence they become ſplendidly and exemplarily unhappy. Indeed no good can be reaſonably expected, where Affection does not take place, before Religion ties the married Pair; and therefore Parents ſhould

seriously consider, before they command their Children to marry, where there is no Probability of loving, or in being beloved. The Obedience and Compliance of Children may make them much more miserable, than Disobedience and Refusal would make them faulty. But when a Person is at Liberty, and under no Constraint, for such to marry without Love is inexcusable.

But to obey God's Command, Men must not only marry whom they love, but continue their Love as long as they live; and take all proper Methods to confirm and strengthen their Affection, and to avoid every Occasion that may wear out, or weaken it. Men for the securing their own Peace and Happiness, should be very careful to continue their Affection to their Wives, and not suffer Errors and Mistakes, Miscarriages and light Offences, Infirmities and heedless Indiscretions, to alienate their Hearts from, or to slight and despise them; for Coldness and Indifference will soon end in personal Dislike, and secret Aversion. They who cannot bear with, and make Allowances for many Failings and Defects, are not fit for Society and Friendship, much less for one so constant and continued, as the married State requires. And if Men will not consider the Imperfections of human Nature, if they will not remember their own Mistakes and Miscarriages, if they will unreasonably take Advantage, and make ill-natured Observations and Reflections on the Follies and Weaknesses of their Partners, and treasure them up in Memory to feed their ill Humour, and make them Occasions of Upbraidings and unseemly Revilings, they

they will soon see an End of Peace and Quietness, and find their Affection to cool and languish. It is no doubt the Interest and Duty of Women, carefully to preserve the Affection and Esteem of their Husbands, by all the virtuous Methods they can take; but that will not avail, unless the Men make it easy to them, by Prudence and good Humour. Husbands must also take in good Part the Endeavours of their Wives, for a Thing *well done* is not enough, unless it be well taken. All Creatures are imperfect, and stand in need of Patience and Forgiveness at one another's Hands; in a constant Conversation, and the Management of many and various Family Affairs, there will unavoidably arise Occasions of Disagreement and Distaste. And if both Sides will not make kind Constructions of each others Actions; to believe the best, patiently and gently pass over many unlucky Accidents and Inconveniencies, the conjugal Affection will be quickly lost; for it only lives by kind Forbearance, mutual Condescension, and a good Esteem of each other. And when a Man considers, that it is his Interest, Ease, and Duty to love his Partner, and that he ceases to be quiet and happy, when he begins to dislike her; he will find it necessary to continue his Affection. To be a good Husband is the best and wisest Thing he can do, and which will most contribute to his own Content and Quiet; and therefore a tolerably prudent Man, who considers he can never change his Condition, will, for his own sake, make the best of it, by rendering it easy and delightful to them both.

Secondly, the Love of Husbands consists in being faithful and true to their Engagements, Promises, and solemn Vows. This mutual Fidelity is so essentially necessary to Marriage, that a notorious Breach and Violation thereof, does not only dissolve the most religious Contracts, and solemn Promises of Marriage, and set the innocent Party at full Liberty, but it dissolves the Marriage Band itself before God. The Nature of a Christian Marriage is such, as to require mutual Fidelity, and the Performance of their Promise made, to forsake all other Persons, and to adhere to each other, so long as they both shall live. This is supposed in all Contracts, and verbally expressed, and actually engaged for, in all compleated Marriages; and to this Fidelity the Men are equally obliged with the Women, how little soever they observe, or think of it. They make the same Promise, are tied by the same Reason and Command of God; and if there is some Difference between the Offence of one Party and the other, with respect to Reputation, and the Confusion of Families, yet this does not concern the Conscience. Fidelity is what both Men and Women engage for and promise; and therefore in the Violation of it, there is Falshood and Injustice, they break a solemn Vow, and do great Injury. This Fidelity the Man expects from her, and for the Violation of it, is ready to call for Fire from Heaven for Vengeance. And if he cannot think heinously of his own Offences in this Instance, let him see himself, by considering it in the Case of his own Mother or Daughter. Would he not think them injured in the highest Manner, if either

ther of their Husbands should prove false, and wander from their Beds, in pursuit of unlawful Pleasures? and yet just as he imagines *they* would take the Falshood and Injustice of their Husbands, let him suppose that his *own* Wife takes *his*, and bears it with the same Concern and Heaviness. It is as reasonable that his own Father, or Son-in-Law should injure and afflict his Mother and Daughter, as *he* should injure and afflict *his* Wife, by such his Falshood. The deep Resentment of this Injury by Wives, is also a farther Aggravation of its Heinousness. This Breach of Faith is one of the sharpest Injuries that can be done, and the worst taken by those that are concerned. Of all Wrongs God has made this the most grievous, sensible, and afflicting, that Men might certainly be more careful to avoid it. But those Husbands are yet more unpardonable, who to their Falshood add an impudent Contempt of Decency and good Fame, in openly afflicting their Partners, by an abominable public Commerce. This is a great Aggravation of their Falshood, and makes it cruel, as well as impudent and injurious; not but that the most concealed and secret Violations of the Marriage Faith are unkind, and do by Degrees insensibly alienate the Hearts and Affections of Husbands from their Wives. That great Change of the Mind, which usually arises from the Husband's Falshood and adulterous Thefts; That Coldness and Indifference which succeeds, in spite of all their Art and faint Endeavours to conceal it by formal Kindness; is to the Wife remarkably conspicuous, easily, and soon discerned. To be *kindly af-*

fectioned to the Person, is therefore the surest Way, to prevent Men from falling into these adulterous and abominable Snares; and nothing is so likely to retain their Affections, as being faithful to their Vows.

When Men give Way to new Engagements, the old ones will, maugre all their Designs and Resolutions to the contrary, soon wear off. The virtuous Love declines as fast, as the criminal Affection gains Ground. A Man may intend and purpose, that notwithstanding his Follies, he will retain his old Affection, but this is not in his Power; 'tis insensibly lost, by wandring new Desires. It ends at best, in formal, cold Civilities, but more often in secret Hatred and Averfion. The wisest Husband in the World, cannot foresee all the Consequences of his Falshood, nor know where it will end. It therefore behoves him, above all other Things, to keep faithful to his Wife. For the Affection of the Wife makes not the Husband happy, unless the Husband also loves his Wife; it is the mutual Kindness of each Party, that blesses the Relation. Let no Man or Woman think of being happy, in the Affection of each other, unless they are tenderly affectioned to one another; they must unite their Minds, or be uneasy. And was not Religion concerned in this Dispute, nor no Obligation on the Conscience urging this Fidelity; yet common Prudence and Experience would prescribe it, as the best Method to secure that Affection of Husbands to their Wives, which is really necessary to the Discharge of that Relation, and to promote and maintain domestick Peace and Happiness. So that I shall
only

only mention the Command of God enjoining this Fidelity, which, added to the former Reasons, makes the Transgressor inexcusable. It is indeed so much a Man's *Interest*, to be true and faithful to his Vows and Promises, that it is enough barely to say, it is his *Duty* also. It is *one* of the *ten* Commandments, which most convincingly proves its Importance. All married People are forbid Adultery, and in order to fulfil that Command, are bid to love each other; for they who love each other, will be faithful to one another; but they who are not faithful to each other, cannot long continue to love one another as they ought,

The Men of Liberty have nothing in earnest to oppose to these Reasons and Commands, but the Examples of some Men in Scripture, high in God's Favour, who yet had more Wives than one, or at least had many Concubines. But to this it may be answered, that *Example* is not the Rule of Life, but *Precept*. Many good Men have done very ill Things; and when the Scriptures recount their evil Actions without Blame or Censure, they do not thereby justify and approve them. If there be a Rule in Scripture censuring, or forbidding any evil Action, this is enough; those Actions are sufficiently condemned by such general Rule, tho' not particularly blamed in the Recital of them. We should have known Murder and Adultery to have been great Sins in *David*, by their being expressly prohibited by God's Commands, tho' the Scriptures had told us ever so often, that he was a Man after God's own Heart, and had not in particular mentioned God's being highly displeased at them. His being a
Man

Man after God's own Heart would not have made us believe, that Murther and Adultery were innocent, and allowed in him, whilst we found them condemned by God's Word in general ; but we should have concluded, that *David* was (except in these Matters) a careful Worshipper of God, and for many good Qualities dear to him. Besides, some of these Liberties might be permitted, in those Days and Places, for Reasons proper and peculiar to them, which would not be fit for others at a different Time. However, it is most reasonable, to have Regard to its first Institution in Paradise, where *Adam* had but one *Eve* ; and to the Restauration of the World by *Noah* and his Sons after the Flood, where each had but one Wife. And yet at these two Seasons, there was the greatest Occasion of multiplying People to inhabit the World, that ever since has been : And whatever Permissions or Indulgences followed afterwards, 'tis certain, that our Saviour reduced it to its first Appointment and Institution, and so the *Christian* World continues to observe it.

The *third* Particular, in which Husbands are to shew they love their Wives, is in taking Care of, and making all due Provision for them ; to maintain them whilst they live, like Partners ; and if they survive them, to leave them according to their Estate and Condition. Wives, agreeably to good Sense, Reason, and the Custom of our Country, are *Friends* and *Companions* to their Husbands ; not *Slaves*, nor *menial Servants* ; and therefore in Decency, should be Partners in their Fortunes. They unavoidably partake of all
their

their Troubles and Afflictions, and 'tis but just for them to participate of their Felicities. A Husband cannot fall into Decay, Poverty, or scarce any Affliction, but his Wife is involved therein. They are inseparable Companions in Trouble and Misery, and ought to be so in all their good Fortune. And this is expressly promised in Marriage, by the Wife's being *endowed with all her Husband's worldly Goods*; that is, she is to have every Thing belonging to him, which is necessary, convenient, and delightful; to be as easy and happy, as his State and Condition can make her. She bargains for this on *her* Part, and he engages for it on *his*; and it would be unjust and unkind, for him to deny it. Nor is this Care to last only during Life, but it must extend to the making Provision for them after they are dead, should the Wife survive. It is indecent, and very hard, that Wives should, on their Husbands Death, fall from Plenty and Esteem, into Poverty and Vileness.

These are the three Particulars, in which Husbands are to shew to their Wives, the Love which God commands them. They are to be kindly affectioned to their Persons; true and faithful to their Promises; to maintain them decently and handsomely, whilst they live with them, and to take all due Care, according to their Condition and Ability, to leave them easy when they die. Nor is the Duty of Husbands sufficiently discharged, by one or two of these Particulars, but by all together; they are so linked, that whoever observes one of them, on good Principles, will not omit *all*. He will see the same Reason and Command of God
for

for *all*, as much as for *one* And whoever seriously considers, and intends to make a sober, virtuous, and religious Husband, and does not marry with a wild and sensual, heedless and inconsiderate Spirit, will certainly endeavour to make a wise and prudent Choice at first, such as may laudably engage, and reasonably retain his Affections. For Affection will engage Men to Fidelity, and make them careful and solicitous to provide for their Wives, both in Life and Death. And without this, it will be difficult for Husbands to *love their Wives*, or not be *bitter against them*; which remains to be considered.

The Phrase seems to be taken from the Nature of bitter Things, which when tasted, gives Offence and Disgust. Husbands should not, by any peevish, morose, and ill-natured Carriage, make themselves uneasy to their Wives; nor be provoked to Anger, to hard, unkind Words or Actions, by their Failings and Imperfections; this would be as bitter and distasteful to them, as any Thing, that is so, can be to the Palate or Stomach. They are neither in Word nor Deed, to use any Severity, or Rigour towards them. There is a Bitterness of Language, that every one understands; Words that wound to the Quick, like *very Swords*. But what usually gives them their Point and Edge, is the Consideration of the Person who says them. The Words of Strangers affect us little, those of a malicious Adversary make no Impression, but the hard Words of Friends, and Relations, occasion Grief and great Concern: Ill Usage received from those we love, occasions Sadness and much Trouble.

Trouble, inward Pain and Uneasiness. Harsh and bitter Words are grievous to near Relations, because it is so little looked for, and expected; and this is the Reason, why bitter Words from Husbands, are so afflicting to Wives. In Reason and Nature they look for, and expect, all Forbearance, Gentleness, and Patience; Affability, Condescension, and every Thing that can proceed, from Consideration and good Nature. But Moroseness, Peevishness, Revilings, and ungenerous Upbraidings, to soft and tender Dispositions, is a Treatment very cruel, and afflicting: It sits heavy on the Mind, most sensibly wounds the Heart, and makes them pass their Hours uncomfortably, and often to end their Life in Sorrow. Such Bitterness is unmanly and unjust, irreligious and unreasonable. And whoever considers, the Difficulties and Sufferings, to which Women are unavoidably subjected and exposed, above Men; as well by their own natural Frame and Make, as by many other usual Accidents; must think himself obliged, to deal gently with them, and by Patience and Forbearance, help to make their Burthen lighter, and to comfort them under their Infirmities, But there is also a *being bitter* that is beyond Words, and proceeds to personal Violence, and Hurt; a Thing unworthy any good and honest Man, not justifiable between a Master and his Slave, without great Necessity; much less to be endured from any Husband to his Partner and Companion, who is of equal Dignity. This truly villainous Practice, was so very unbecoming, that the Civil Law

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Law, did in some Cases, allow it a just Ground for Divorce.

I have now done with the Duty of Husbands, contained in this Command, *to love their Wives, and not be bitter against them*; in which there is nothing, but what is very reasonable and fit, to be complied with, by every good and honest Man; nothing but what will tend to procure and promote his own Peace, the Happiness and Comfort of his Life. And indeed so it is, in the right Discharge of every other Duty. For when we cease to be good Fathers and good Children, good Subjects and good Husbands, good Masters and good Servants, how can we possibly be happy? Whilst we are sociable Creatures, we must have all the social Virtues; we can *expect* no Duty, if we *pay* none. Tho' we shall never be truly happy in this World of Misery, yet we cannot in any tolerable Measure and Degree be so, without a good Intention, and a hearty reasonable Endeavour, to discharge with Faithfulness and Care, the several Duties, we owe in the World. This is the End and Purpose of our being sent into, and continuing in it; and of which we shall one Day, give a strict Account to God, and shall receive a Reward, or Punishment, according to our Diligence, or Neglect, in performing those Duties.

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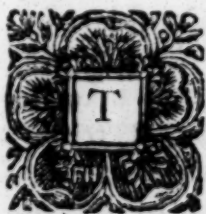


DISCOURSE IX.

DUTY of SERVANTS to MASTERS.

COL. iii. 22, 23, 24.

Servants obey in all Things, your Master's according to the Flesh ; not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God ; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto Men ; knowing, that of the Lord, ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance ; for ye serve the Lord Christ.



THESE Words contain, *First*, a Command to Servants to *obey their Masters in all Things*. *Secondly*, a Caution, not to serve with *Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God*. *Thirdly*, the Reason; of Servants paying all Obedience to their Masters ; *they shall receive of the Lord their Reward*. That is, ‘ Servants should ‘ be at all Times, and on all Occasions, exactly ‘ diligent, faithful, and honest, in their Masters ‘ Busi-

' Business, whether they are present or absent.
 ' They are to serve sincerely and without Dis-
 ' simulation, knowing they are always in God's
 ' Sight, who will reward the Service of Servants,
 ' and treat them in Heaven as his Children. For
 ' by faithfully serving their earthly Masters, they
 ' serve *Christ* their Lord, and heavenly Master;
 ' who observing from above their Fidelity, Dili-
 ' gence, and Honesty, will deal with them as
 ' good and honest Servants, and, in due Time,
 ' cause them to *enter into the Joy of their Lord.*'

To obey in *all Things*, is of very great Extent.
 Children are to obey their Parents in *all Things* ;
 and Wives are to be subject to their Husbands, in
every Thing. And yet neither Father, Husband,
 Master, nor any Superior, is to be obeyed in all
 Things : Obedience without Restriction or Re-
 serve, belongs to no mortal Creature. Let Com-
 mands be never so express, full, general, and ex-
 tensive, there will always be Necessity for Limi-
 tations and Restrictions ; arising either from the
 Reason of the Command, the Nature of the Sub-
 ject, the positive Command of God, the Laws
 of the Kingdom, or some other Consideration.
 And tho' I have already considered these Excep-
 tions, yet here also it may be proper to take No-
 tice, in what Particulars Masters cannot require,
 and Servants ought not to pay Obedience. And
first, the Laws of God are certainly to be pre-
 ferred to all the Commands of Masters, or any
 other Superiors. If God command one Thing
 to be done, and prohibit the doing another ; the
 Servant is there to obey *God*, rather than his
Master. And the Laws of the Land, are also

to be preferred to all the Commands of Masters and Superiors, because they are above, and were before them. The Laws of the Land are superior to all Masters. Servants are *only* to obey in all Things, where, by the Laws of God, or the Land, they are at Liberty to obey. A Servant must never obey his Master in any Thing that is immoral, or against the positive Commands of God. The Obligations that all People, Servants as well as Masters, lie under to be just and honest, and do no Hurt or Injury to any one, are antecedent to, and greater than any Obligations a Master can lay on his Servant. If any Master orders a Servant to do what is contrary to God's Command, such Servant must say with virtuous *Joseph*, *How can I do this Thing, and sin against God?* How can I be unjust or wicked, in Obedience to my Master, when the doing it is forbidden by God? God is the Master of us all, with him there is no Respect of Persons, Bond or Free, are equally obliged to obey his Laws, and no Power less than his own, can dispense with the Neglect of them.

The Authority of Masters over Servants, is very useful to the good Order and Welfare of the World, and esteemed so reasonable, that many small Offences are excused in Servants acting by Authority and Command; because they are under some Restraint and Awe, and that many Inconveniences would attend Servants disputing, or scrupulously examining, the Orders and Injunctions of their Masters. This indeed only concerns indifferent Things, where Submission and Obedience best become them. But when the Command

mand opposes some Law of God, they must disobey; there no one has Authority against Justice, Honesty, or Truth. Neither are all Servants *equally* obliged to obey their Masters in *all Things*, tho' innocent, lawful, or indifferent; because all are not alike Servants. The State of Servitude is very different in one Country, from what it is in another, on Account of the Variety of Contracts and Agreements; and the Duty and Obedience of Servants must be measured by those Contracts and different Customs. Therefore when St. Paul exhorts the *Colossian* and *Ephesian* Servants, to *obey their Masters in all Things*, he must be thus understood. To the Slaves and Captives he means to say, 'Obey your Masters in
' all Things, as becomes your sad Condition, and
' make your Chains as easy as you can, by your
' Compliance and Submission;' but to the hired Servants he must be understood to say, 'Obey
' your Masters in all Things, according to your
' Contract and Agreement, behave yourselves as
' diligently and faithfully as you have promised
' to do, or by the Custom of the Place, you are
' presumed to have promised them.' He might exhort the *Slaves* to obey their Masters at the *Oar*, and in the *Mines*; but we have no Reason to suppose he exhorted *hired* Servants to submit to be sent under Ground, or to the Gallies, if their Masters should command them thither. Neither the Customs of the Country, nor Contract, gave Masters any such Authority over hired Servants, and therefore they owed no such Submission or Obedience. So that Respect must be had to the different State of Servitude, to know
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what Liberty Servants have, *not* to comply with Masters Commands. And if the Exhortation must be differently understood with Respect to each Sort of Servants at *Ephesus*, or *Coloss*, so also must Regard be had to the Usages and Contracts, of all the different Nations of the World; for the Apostle introduced no new Servitude, nor abrogated any old one, but Servants are left by *Christianity* just as it found them; their Condition is not at all altered, much less for the worse. And was this well considered, as to Princes and Subjects, as well as Masters and Servants, many weak Inferences and Arguments from the different State of *Jewish* or *Roman* Government and Subjection, to that of other free and brave Nations, had been avoided, which only serve to perplex well-meaning People. Every Servant then is commanded by God, to discharge the Duty and Service, which his Station or Agreement require of him; he must answer the End of his being entertained, and perform the Conditions, on which he is admitted to Service. This is the Substance of the Command.

The *second* Thing to be considered, is the Caution, as to the Way and Manner of performing their Service, and the End they must propose. *They should not serve with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God, and doing whatever they did, not as to Men, but as to God.* They must not only appear to be good and faithful Servants, by being diligent, and seemingly just and honest in their Masters Presence; but be *really* so in their Absence. They must be so on religious Principles, because it is
their

their Duty by God's Command, and their own Engagement. They are by both obliged to serve diligently and honestly, without Dissimulation and Hypocrisy. They must be in Truth as good Servants, as they would appear to be, to Strangers, or their Masters; *fearing God*. They are continually in God's Sight, tho' not always in their Masters, and they should fear him, who constantly sees them, and most certainly knows, whether they are as diligent and honest in their Master's Ignorance or Absence, as when he stands by and observes them. If they would approve themselves to God, they must be diligent and honest in their Masters Service; and whether Men reward them or not, yet God will. A Master may be pleased, tho' deceived with a seeming Diligence and Honesty; but God cannot be so pleased, he knows the Heart, and sees the Falshood at the Bottom. And when a Servant pleases God, as all do, that are just and faithful, diligent and careful in their Business; they seldom fail of pleasing Men. They may by some Misfortune, or Mistake, fail of pleasing Men, even when they please God, but then they have the Satisfaction of knowing they endeavoured also to please Men. For Servants are not forbidden Eye-service and pleasing Men; but the being *only* Eye-servants, and pleasing their Masters whilst present. They are commanded to behave as well, to be as diligent, just, and true, at all Times, as in their Masters Sight. And would a Servant but observe this Rule, he might please both God and his Master. This would prevent all Sloth, unreasonable Waste of Time, Neglect
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of Business, all Deceit and secret Thefts. A Servant, when he enters into Service, gives up his Time, and Labour by Agreement to his Master, in Consideration of what Wages, Keeping, and Protection he expects from him; he would therefore be unjust to waste that Time, and spare that Labour which is none of his. They are his Masters by Contract, and who ought to have the Advantage of them; it is defrauding People of their Due, keeping back Part of what is already sold and agreed for; and it would be full as just for a Master to detain Part of his Servants Wages contracted for, at the Year's End, as for a Servant to waste a great deal of that Time, and spare a great deal of that Labour, which was his Masters by Agreement. Because a Servant has no more Right to his Masters Money, than the Master has Right to his Servants Time and Labour; the one not standing to his Bargain, sets the other at Liberty. Justice is the rendering to all Men, what is their Due, and Injustice the detaining from any one what is their Right. It is by Virtue of Contract, that Masters are entitled to their Servants Time and Labour, or that Servants have a Right to whatever Wages or Advantages are agreed and contracted for. And either must be unjust and wicked, that does not perform the Terms and Conditions, that both agree upon.

As to the Space and Proportion of Time and Labour, to be bestowed on the Master's Service, let Servants consider, that there is a Difference between the Extreame of Sloth, and the Quickness of Eye-Service, and that the middle Way

is most reasonable, and would suffice. A moderate and continued Labour has Advantages that Servants do not think on ; it makes their necessary Service in Time grow easy. It is so in all Cases ; continued and repeated Acts beget Habits, and Things habitual become easy and familiar. For Servants to be industrious really tends to their Interest ; it makes their Pains and Labour, in Time to be easily endured, and begets in them such an habitual Activity, as will be of great Use and Benefit to them, when they come to be at their own Liberty and Disposal. Then they will see and feel the Advantage of being good Servants, they will reap the Fruits of all that Industry, Care, and Labour, which they exercised in their Masters Service, by being so for themselves, and in their own Concerns, when they come to be Masters ; this is the most natural and usual Consequence. They who have served their Masters with the greatest Industry and Diligence, will certainly best serve themselves, when they come to it. That Application of Mind, and Disposition of Body, to labour and take Pains, which they have long exercised, will not then forsake them ; but be rather encreased and raised, by considering that the Fruits thereof will be gathered by themselves. 'Tis not the Desire of thriving that will effect it, but the being laborious and industrious. Servants may have Skill and Artifice enough, be frugal and good Husbards, but these will not do, without great Industry and Labour. Both Experience and Reason teach, that the better Servants are to their Masters, the sooner they succeed, when they come to manage

their

their own Concerns. There is an absolute Necessity of being careful, diligent, industrious, and laborious, if Men will live easily, and thrive in the World. But then these Qualifications can only be attained by Use, Custom, and constant Practice; and which should be begun when People are young, their Minds susceptible of Impressions, enured to Application, and their Limbs flexible to Labour. Indeed all the Care, Pains, and Skill, that Servants take and acquire, are for their own Benefit and Service at the last. Too indulgent and remiss Masters never make good Servants, nor need they thank them for such Easiness. Every Servant would do well to consider the Inconvenience of Eye-Service, of Sloth, Idleness, and waste of Time. They are thereby injurious to themselves, incapable of answering the Design of their Parents or Friends, in putting them to Trades and Callings, which was to live handsomely in the World; and it also occasions them to be bad Servants, false and unjust in defrauding their Masters of that Time and Labour, which they themselves agreed to give. And tho' a Master does not take Notice of such Neglect, the Crime is still the same in a Servant, who in Conscience ought to do his Duty, not in *Eye-Service*, but in *Sincerity of Heart*, and *fearing God*. He is always in God's Sight, who loves Justice, Sincerity, and Truth. And there is nothing more likely to make, and keep Servants good and careful, than to consider, that God commands them to be so, and will observe their Actions. Not that every Fit of Idleness and Sloth are faulty before God, nor yet all

Loss of Time sinful ; for something of that kind is unavoidable ; but they must indulge themselves in this as little as possible. The best Way to prevent it, is to remember, that in the main their Industry, Diligence, and Labour are contracted for, and that too great a Waste of Time, is so much Loss and Injury to those who employ them. Nor do any Sort of Servants want Encouragement to excite their Industry and Labour ; for they subsist by Credit and good Fame, which nothing so much gives, or secures, as the being diligent and careful, industrious and laborious in their Service.

Besides this, Servants are to discharge their Duty with all Faithfulness and Honesty, Truth and Justice. They are obliged to be as frugal, and good Husbands for their Masters, as they can with Innocence and Honesty, and must not defraud them of any thing. This is the End and Intention of all Masters in taking Servants. They cannot always be at home or abroad, and yet their Business must not be neglected. But the Master's Absence is not supplied, when the Servant does not act, as if the Master was present ; and the Master stays at home to his Loss, if the Servant he employs abroad, is false and faithless. So that the being entertained as a Servant, implies a faithful, just, and honest Mind ; one that can be trusted with the Master's Concerns, to transact them in his Behalf. He is to represent his Master when absent, and to be as solicitous for his Advantage, as he would be himself. But no Servant is to be unjust, hard, or unreasonable in Behalf of his Master, nor impose on the Ignorance, Simplicity, or Want of Skill, of those
he

he deals with. He must not think of recommending himself to his Master's Favour, by overreaching and deceiving *others*, no more than to deceive, or be unfaithful to his *Master*. He must be useful to him, but still innocent and honest himself; and therefore no Master should encourage or countenance such Proceedings in their Servants, because they thereby encourage Injustice in another, and by Connivance make it their own Act. A Servant is also obliged not to be profuse or wasteful of his Master's Goods and Substance; He must do him all the Good he can, but no Mischief; for all unnecessary Waste and Profusion, is so much Loss and Damage to a Master. Servants should behave as carefully and frugally in their Masters Absence, as if they were present. To appear frugal and careful in their Master's Sight, and to be wasteful and profuse in their Absence, is not only *Eye-Service* and Hypocrisy, but Falshood and Injustice; 'tis injuring their Masters, whilst they think themselves well served. There is little Difference between luxurious and profuse Waste of Masters Goods, and an actual defrauding them; because Masters in either Case are so much the poorer, which makes it a Sort of civil Theft: Indeed where Masters allow not what is fit and reasonable, it will be necessary to take what is convenient; tho' it is better to leave such Service, than to act against the Masters Order.

Lastly, all Servants are to be exactly just and honest, neither to take their Money or Goods, any farther than they are reasonably presumed to

allow them. It is of all *Thefts* the worst, being aggravated with *Breach of Trust*. If Robbers steal from us, they are only *violent* and *unjust*, not *false* and *treacherous*; but Servants having given their Faith and Promise to be just and honest, is the Reason of being trusted and employed by Masters; so that their Thefts are also Treacheries, and much aggravated, by being Trusts reposed in them. They are greater Villains than others that steal more, because they have bound themselves to be exactly honest, and to secure their Masters from others, to the best of their Abilities, and which makes them to be more confided in. If a Servant kill his Master, a Wife her Husband, a Priest his Bishop, this is not a simple Murder, but Sort of *Treason*, because these Parties owe Faith and Allegiance to the other; and their Crimes are raised in Proportion to the Obligations they lie under to those Superiors. Thus also, Falshood and Perfidiousness of Friends, Relations, and such as are intrusted, raise their Injustice to a greater Height, than if done by others. And there is more Wickedness in the Theft of *Servants*, than of *Strangers*, because it is evidently accompanied with Breach of Trust, Falshood, and Treachery, against which there is no Guard. Let Servants therefore, when under Temptation to defraud their Masters, Mistresses, and others that trust them, consider these Particulars.

- ‘ That such Practice is evidently very wicked;
- ‘ That it is more so in them, because they are
- ‘ intrusted; That a Discovery of it here will
- ‘ probably be their Ruin; That if not discovered,

‘ it will lie heavy on their Conscience, and
‘ require Repentance and Satisfaction, or be o-
‘ therwise sorely punished and avenged by God ;
‘ That the Practice is in itself evidently wicked,
‘ it being unjust to take from their Master what
‘ is his, and appropriate it to themselves, who
‘ have no Right thereto ; That the first Princi-
‘ ple of common Honesty, and indeed of all
‘ human Converse, is implanted in all Mens
‘ Hearts, and recommended by our Saviour,
‘ *whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto*
‘ *you, even so do to them* ; That Theft is a mani-
‘ fest Violation of this Principle, it being cer-
‘ tain, that no one likes another should take a-
‘ way, or detain from him what is his Right.’

A Thief injures another against his own Con-
science, he defrauds his Neighbour of what he
knows he should not do, and thereby offends
against that Light, which God hath placed in
every Man, to guide and direct him. Stealing
is a Sin, not only because forbidden by God,
but he forbids it, because it is directly a Sin
against the Good and Quiet of Mankind, and
would destroy all Right, and subvert the Or-
der of the World. Whenever then any one
invades another's right, either secretly or openly,
he undermines and subverts the Foundation of
every Man's Security, destroys mutual Trust
and Confidence, injures his Neighbour, sins a-
gainst his own Conscience, offends against
both divine and human Laws, and must there-
fore know he acts wickedly. And Servants de-
frauding their Masters, are yet more wicked than
others doing fraudulent Things, because they

also betray a Trust. They cannot do such Injury without great Diffimulation and Treachery ; they counterfeit Justice, Truth, and Honesty, by which they are trusted, and then make use of that Trust and Confidence to do Mischief. Let Servants also consider when under any Temptations to steal, that a Discovery may be their Ruin ; for their Livelihood depends on their Credit. Faithfulness and Honesty are better to them than their Hands and Feet. All their Skill and Industry, Strength and Abilities, would signify little, if they are known to be false and unjust. Their other good Qualities would make them more suspected, rather than recommend them to Employment, if People could not trust them ; for if Masters know them false and unjust, they must always be on their watch, lest what they get by their Industry and Labour, they should lose by their Thievery. There is nothing so necessary to a Servant, as the Reputation of being just and honest ; nothing more certain to ruin them than bad Fame, and the Suspicion of false dealing. And therefore if they only acted on prudential Considerations, and consulted their own Interest, they should be honest. When a Servant steals, he undermines the very Ground he stands on ; thinks he is only taking something from his Master, when he is in Truth taking from himself the Means of his own Subsistence ; for when his Frauds are discovered, he is absolutely ruined. And there is all the Danger in the World of their being some time or other found out, which, when known, will render them incapable

capable of farther Service; for who will entertain a Thief and Villain?

Lastly, let Servants consider, that whether or no their Injustice and Falshood are discovered to Men, yet it cannot be hid from God; that their wicked Practice will always be a Burden upon their own Conscience; that they must repent and make amends, or they will certainly be punished in the next World. This Consideration would prevent all Frauds in Servants, and keep them just and honest. What will it signify for them to conceal their Thefts and Falshood from their Masters, and *appear* honest, when their own Hearts assure them they are false and wicked; and when their Conscience tells them, that God who is to judge them at the last Day, exactly knows all their Actions, and even their very Thoughts? To have the Mind perpetually burden'd with the Remembrance of its Guilt; to live under constant Reproaches of Conscience, for having wronged and defrauded a Master who deserved no such Usage, must needs create the utmost Uneasiness. So that a false Servant, who gives away the Peace and Quiet of his Mind, has for all his Thefts a miserable Bargain. He knows that God sees him, and has threatned to punish Falshood and Injustice, and yet is not terrified, but ventures on. These Considerations would be of great use to Servants, were they present to their Minds. It would shew them the Baseness, Wickedness, and Danger of being faithless and dishonest Servants, which must be the best Means to keep them just and exact.

The *Third* and last Thing to be considered, is the Reason and Foundation of Servants paying all Obedience and due Service to their Masters; *knowing that of the Lord, they shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, for they serve the Lord Christ.* A good Servant may not only promise himself the natural and usual Rewards of an industrious, careful, just, and faithful Service, from his Master on Earth, and others; but also the Reward of the Inheritance at God's Hands, for *he serves the Lord Christ.* One who in the Form of a Servant disdained not to live and die for the meanest of Mankind, hath promised God's Favour both here and hereafter, to such as do their Duties in the meanest Stations faithfully and truly; and *one* who is enabled to perform his Promises. In great Measure, good Service pays itself, and carries its own Reward. It gains the Favour and Esteem of all. Care and Diligence, Faith and Honesty, make their Service highly acceptable, very easy to themselves, and on all Occasions recommend them to others. Such good Qualities make amends for the Meanness of their Condition. They who serve their Masters honestly and well, lay a good Foundation for their own Self-Subsistence. The Neighbourhood will remember their Diligence and Honesty, and promote their Interest, by giving a good Report of them; and they will be more trusted than others of greater Skill and Knowledge. Faithfulness and Honesty give Servants better Credit, than Industry and Labour; because People naturally think, and with good Reason, that God is interested in their Favour.

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These Considerations should alleviate their Misfortunes, and make their Condition easy to them. And indeed God hath wisely ordered, that every Condition of Life hath something to make it not only tolerable, but comfortable, if People are not wanting to themselves, but will be careful, honest, and religious, and properly discharge all their Duties. The State of Servitude is esteemed the meanest and most miserable of any, but it may be made easy, tho' not eligible. If Servants have more of the *Labours* of Life, they have less of the *Cares*; their *Bodies* are more exercised and fatigued, but their *Minds* are less perplexed. They are only concerned in *one* Matter, whilst others have *innumerable* Things to think on, and look after. They have their Masters *only* to please, when perhaps their Masters must court and humour all they deal with. They have generally themselves alone to provide for; but their Masters may have Wives, Children, and Relations. Whatever Scarcity or public Evils happen, *they* find but little Alteration. Changes of Government affect not *them*, when Masters may thereby be quite ruined. *They* contribute little to the Support of the Public; pay no Rates nor Taxes; lose no gainful Employments; suffer nothing by the Malice, or Insolence of Parties; undergo no Odium, Calumny or Slander. In a Word, they are less distressed and straitned, suffer less Hardships and Misfortunes, than any other Sort of People. Servants should sometimes reflect on these Conveniencies, as well to keep them easy, as to make them more thankful, and that they

might the better discern the Kindness of God's Providence, in so ordering their Condition, that however low in Appearance, yet with these Advantages, it is for Ease and Happiness of Mind, equal with many of their Masters. But when to all these Advantages and natural Rewards, inseparable from their Condition of Life, we also add the *Reward of the Inheritance*, promised by God to the careful, industrious, faithful, just, and honest Discharge of the Duty of Servants; there can be nothing wanting to excite them to a due Performance thereof.

Let Servants therefore, for their Comfort and Encouragement, seriously think on these Things, and thus consider; 'That the State of Servitude is
' thought absolutely necessary, by the wise Creator
' and Disposer of all Things; for without it, the
' World could not be governed and maintained.
' That it falls to their Share to be instrumental
' to the public Good, in that Station; not for
' their *own*, nor for the Sins of their *Fathers*, but
' by that Uncertainty of Affairs, which God for
' wise, good, but undiscovered Reasons, permits
' to be in the World. That it is no Token of his
' Anger and Displeasure, for he is willing they
' should avoid and fly from that Misfortune, by
' their Industry and Care; and blesses them with
' Opportunities, the same Abilities and natural
' Faculties, that he gives the Governors and
' Princes of the World. He only commands,
' that whilst they continue Servants, they should
' behave as becomes their Condition, with all
' Submission and Humility, Obedience, Diligence, and Industry; with Truth, and Justice,
' Faith-

Faithfulness and Honesty; which will make their Condition easy to themselves, and cause them to be well served by others, when they come to be Masters. And to shew how acceptable this is *to him*, by its being so necessary and useful to the World; *He* to encourage it, promises, that they who behave well here, as Servants, shall be treated as *Children*, in the Life to come; when they shall have the *Reward of Inheritance*, which properly belongs to God's Children. If they perform their Duty here, he will reward their Labours with eternal Rest and Quiet, and their Faith and Honesty with Rewards that never fail; they shall be happy in the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. Whatever Hardships, Trouble, and Uneasiness they undergo; whatever want of Necessaries or Conveniencies they suffer; whatever cruel Severities they endure *here*, by the undue Rigour of their Masters and Superiors; *there* they shall have Amends and Satisfaction made, in most ample Manner. When once their Service is accomplished, they shall receive double at their Lord's Hands, for all their Sufferings and undeserved Misfortunes. Under the worst of their Circumstances, let them be supported with this *reasonable* Hope, and *well-grounded* Expectation, by discharging their Duty carefully and honestly.

There are two Things in this divine Conduct worthy our Observation. *First*, that no Duty of Life, if well discharged, will go without Reward in another Life, to make Amends for any Sufferings here; so that no one need be discouraged

couraged now, tho' his Labours should be in vain. Good Subjects may have lawless Governors, and good Children unnatural Parents; good Wives unkind and faithless Husbands, and good Servants hard and unreasonable Masters. And on the other hand, these Superiors may have their corresponding Inferiors, as faulty. All these mutual Duties, the Good of Mankind requires, that they should be well performed; but this would not be unless Mankind had a hopeful Prospect of some Recompence, to excite and enable them to Performance. This Prospect God lays open to all the World, by giving them the Hopes of Heaven, which they who will be his Children, shall, as a Reward for their Obedience, inherit for ever. The other Thing observable is, that whatever Difference and Distinction God commands or permits to be amongst Men, yet the greatest Favours and Blessings, the truest Dignities and Honours, are common to all; I mean, Grace and Virtue here, and the Happiness of Heaven hereafter. All Men cannot possibly be great, honourable, and rich; or Governors, Masters, and great Traders; but all Men may be just and honest, virtuous and religious, may live in God's Favour in this World, and be thereby happy in the next. All Men cannot have Houses or Lands, Estates and Honours here; but all may have their everlasting Dwellings in Houses not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. Let Servants then consider, that however mean and despicable their Condition may appear in the Sight of Men, yet in God's Eyes, who best understands the Value of his

his Creatures, they are of equal Worth with the great and noble. He has given them Bodies as beautiful and useful, Faculties of Mind as fine and good, made them as capable of being virtuous, and religious; has redeemed them with the same precious Blood of *Christ*, opened the same Gates of Heaven, and prepared for them the same Glory: Only they must behave well and wisely in their Condition, as becomes those that serve *the Lord Christ*, that is, who profess themselves *Christians*. He is the common Master of the whole World, him his Servants must first and principally obey, and under him their several Masters and Superiors, according to his Order and Command. 'Tis *He* to whom the Father has committed all Power; the Dispensation of Rewards and Punishments are in his Hands; who will judge the World in Righteousness. And as Men obey his Laws, and discharge the several Duties of this Life, in their distinct Relations; so shall they fare in the other: Whether they are rich or poor, great or small, bond or free, Master or Servant, for *with him there is no respect of Persons*.



DISCOURSE X.

DUTY of MASTERS to SERVANTS.

COL. iv. 1.

Masters give unto your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.



T. Paul, in delivering the Duties that Superiors owe to their Inferiors, is very careful to observe the Decorum of Things, and generally uses such Terms as imply that the Discharge of *their* Part, is a Matter of meer Grace and Favour, rather than of Debt and Justice. As, *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil. Husbands love your Wives. Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath. Masters give unto your Servants that which is just and equal.* Whereas to all Inferiors he speaks in the way of Command. *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers. Wives submit yourselves to your own*
Husbands.

Husbands. Children obey your Parents in all Things. Servants obey your Masters in all Things. And yet it would not be right to infer, that St. Paul intends to bind *Inferiors* to their Duties, more closely than *Superiors*, for his Design is to bind both alike; only the Nature of their several Duties, requires a different Carriage and Behavior in the Manner of discharging them. Superiors are as much obliged in Reason, Justice, and by God's Commands, to discharge their Duties to Inferiors, as Inferiors are bound to discharge what they owe to their Superiors. For every Relation being built, and depending on a Contract, either supposed in Nature and Reason, or actually agreed and made, between the Parties related, on what Terms they found convenient: This equally obliges each Party to perform his Part of the Contract, upon which the Relation stands. Justice and Religion know no Difference of Parties or Relations; with them, as with God, there is no respect of Persons; they have only regard to what the Agreement is, and how performed. These Things have been already considered, in treating on the several relative Duties, we owe one another; and having urged the Duty of Servants to their Masters from Reason and God's Command, it is but fit, the Masters should be put in mind of what they owe their Servants, which I shall do in St. Paul's Words, *Masters give unto your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.*

As to the Meaning of *just* and *equal*, it should be observed, that many Words of near the same Sense,

Sense, are used to signify one and the same Thing. Thus when we say such a one is an *honest* and *good* Man, we intend no Difference between an *honest*, or a *good* Man, but mean that he is *either*. So there is no absolute Necessity, that to deal *justly* and *equally*, should signify different Things; but only *very* justly, or *very* equally. And if St. Paul intended any Difference, it is reasonable to suppose, that when he bids Masters to *give what is just to their Servants*, he means, that they should give them, what was theirs by Contract and Agreement, as being bargain'd for: and when he bids them to give what is *equal*, he means, that they should deal fairly, honestly, and kindly with them, to give what is their due in Reason and Conscience, tho' they have not formally contracted with them; and to use them as well as if they had agreed, being as much obliged thereto in Reason and Conscience, as they could be by Bond and solemn Contract. If Men make their Contracts and Agreements the Measure of *Justice*; Reason and Conscience the Rule of determining what is *equal*; then there may be a great deal of Difference between *Justice* and *Equity*. In this Case, the Duty of Masters is somewhat different in being *just*, and being *equal*. First they are commanded to be *just*, to stand to their Agreements, and give their Servants what is contracted for, whether it be Instruction, Wages Maintenance, or Cloathing. Whatever is agreed for, is no doubt in Justice due; and therefore whatever Information, or Instruction is requisite to qualify a Servant for the Calling and

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Profession he is put to, ought to be given him as his due, and not with-held from him : It is the End which such Servants propose, the very Reason of putting themselves into a State of Servitude ; it is what they contract for, and on Account of which they give their Money, Time and Labour. And therefore 'tis great Injustice for Masters to conceal the Skill that is necessary to make them understand their Calling ; *they* do not perform their Contract, without letting Servants know their Business, according to the best of their Capacity ; it is as much their Due, as their daily Food, and detained with equal, if not greater Injury. A Master therefore is both faithless and unjust, that either thro' Design, Envy, or Carelessness, suffers his Servant to continue ignorant and unskilful in the way of his Profession ; he breaks his Covenant, and does not discharge his Trust, by keeping back the Skill and Knowledge that is necessary, to make his Servant what he aims at. The Servant is deceived, loses the only Thing he bargain'd for, expected, and desired ; and for which he pledged his Faith and Service : This is *one* way of refusing to give what is *just* to Servants, and a very great and wicked one it is.

First Another is, of denying them their Wages, detaining the Price and Reward of their Service, that which they bargained and agreed for ; which is as much the Servants due, as any Thing the Master has, is his ; he has already paid for it, and to defraud him thereof, is to rob him of so much. The Master sold it, for so much Time and Labour, as the Servant and he agreed

agreed for, which being paid, by the Servants Work, it becomes his own. A Master may as well agree for Goods with any Customer, and after he has received the Price, detain the Goods also, as to take the Servants Time and Labour, and then deny him his appointed Wages. There is nothing better understood, than the Reasonableness and Justice of performing Agreements, especially such as are deliberately made, and without Fraud; and yet this Part of Justice is very ill practised by many Masters to their Servants, as if they were not obliged to do what is *right to them*, as well as to their Betters. They perhaps weakly imagine, that Superiors are not equally bound by contracting with Inferiors, as they are with Equals; or otherwise, surely they would be as just to Servants, as to any one else. One may the more easily conjecture thus, because the better Quality and Fashion People are of, the more they are observed to offend against this Part of Justice, in not discharging what is due by Contract to their Servants; so that the serving great People, which should be to the Honour and Advantage of Servants, turns to their greater Loss and Mischief; they are thereby only more injured and oppressed. And this additional Guilt, in Masters of Honour and Quality, makes Injustice to be also Oppression. It is *Injustice* to deny what is the Servants due, but when they cannot obtain *that*, by legal common Courses, thro' the great Power and Titles of their Masters, then they also are *oppressed*, as well as *wronged*. Would such consider, that they who are most backward, to do this Sort of Justice

Justice, are generally the worst served, it might have a Tendency to make them act otherwise. For they are often met with, tho' in a faulty manner, and whilst Servants live *with* them, they commonly live *upon* them; that is, they find out Ways, by many Frauds and Villanies, false and wicked Courses, to pay themselves with Interest. One Injustice begets another, and tho' an unjust Master will not *excuse* a false and wicked Servant, yet *he* often *occasions* it, by shewing him the Way, and as it were forcing him to live by such Shifts. Therefore the surest Way of being well served, is to be very just, exactly to perform Agreements, and to give Servants their own; this will make them diligent and faithful, having no Temptation to be otherwise. But when what of Right belongs to them is denied, they first imagine, they may do themselves Justice, and *then* by Degrees make too great Reparations. Thus by being ill used, they become wicked. Against this Injustice, God, in the Scriptures, gives Men frequent Warning. Lev. xix. 15. *Thou shalt not oppress an hired Servant, that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy Brethren, or of thy Strangers, that are in thy Land, within thy Gates.* Deut. xxiv. 14. *At his Day thou shalt give him his Hire, neither shall the Sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his Heart upon it, lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it be Sin unto thee.* To detain the Wages of poor Men, who daily subsist by their Labour, may be the greater Hardship; but whether the Bargain is for a Day or Year, to detain their Hire is the same Injustice.

justice. *Jer. xxii. 13. Woe unto him that useth his Neighbours Service without Wages, and giveth him not for his Work.* This Woe belongs to all that defraud Servants of their Wages, for in the Scripture Sense they are *Neighbours*, and receive the Profit and Advantage of their Work and Service, for which Reason they ought to be paid. So saith the Apostle, *Jam. v. 4. Behold, the Hire of the Labourers, who have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth, and their Cries have entered into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.* The keeping back the Hire of all Labourers, as well as Reapers, will cry unto God, and enter into his Ears; the Cruelty, Injustice, and Offence are the same. And therefore they who make Conscience of paying *Day-labourers*, should think themselves no less obliged to deal justly by their *menial Servants*, because they labour for them by Day and Night. The Case is the same as to Food and Raiment, or any Profit and Advantage the Servant has contracted for, being in Justice his Due, and what ought not to be denied him; it is his, because he earned it, and his Inability to recover it by Might and Law makes it no less his Right, than if he was in actual Possession of it: And the Injustice of detaining from Inferiors, that are weak and helpless, aggravated by this Consideration, that there is Insolence and Unmercifulness joined with it. For when they cannot deny the Right and Justice of Servants and Inferiors Claims, then they have Recourse to Power and Might; they are richer, greater, have more Friends and Interests by whose Help they trample over Justice. N

thing more discovers a bad Inclination, than to oppress the Weak and Helpless, either because they know not how to recover their Right, or are unable to bear the Charge of it. This is to take the Advantage of Mens Weakness, which ought much rather to provoke their Pity and Compassion, to become their Friends and Patrons. These, and whatever else Particulars are due to Servants by Contract and Agreement, may well be supposed to be intended by St. Paul, when he commands Masters to give Servants that which is just.

The other Part of what he commands, is to give them what is *equal*; that is, to deal fairly, honestly, and kindly with them, to give them what is their Due, in Reason and Conscience, tho' not formally contracted for. A Man may be as unjust in detaining, what the Law would not compel him to deliver, as what it would oblige him to give the true Owner. It is the Reason and Benefit of the Contract, that first obliges the Conscience, before the Penalty of Laws takes Place. If a Man borrows Money of another, he is in Conscience obliged to repay him, tho' not under formal Bonds. A Bond is only to constrain him to do, what he knows in Justice ought to be done without Constraint. Where the Reason and Benefit of a Contract appears, there Conscience is as much obliged to make it good, as if it was formally agreed in Words, and tied by Penalties. If therefore a Master receives the Advantage of his Servants Time and Labour, he is obliged in Conscience to make him sufficient Recompence, tho' no Bargain was formally

formally made. This the Conscience says is *equal*, because the Reason and Benefits of a Contract visibly appear. This Rule is not only applicable to *Masters*, as to their Servants, but indeed to all Mankind, with Respect to one another. The Mind may be in Chains, where the Body is free. The Conscience is often obliged, where the Forms of Justice can take no Hold. Many walk at Liberty, and seem free, who yet know within themselves, that they are Prisoners, and due to Justice, tho' they elude it by Slight or Falshood. They know, that in Reason, Justice, and good Conscience, they are obliged to discharge a great many Debts, which no Evidence, Judge, or Jury can extort from them. Their Credit, perhaps, was so great, that they gave no Bond; their reputed Honesty might be such, as that Men would be glad to treat with them on their own Terms.

But by *equal*, is also meant, such Usage and Treatment as is fair, good-natured, and human to make their Lives as easy as we can, consistently with the Performance of their Duty and our Business; and not to pursue them with perpetual Reproach, nor use them as Beasts or Burthen. It is exceeding ill and imprudent, to shew our Superiority by giving such ill Language and Words, as none ought to receive. The Condition of Servitude is bad enough of itself without the additional Evil, of being treated on all Occasions with Contempt and Scorn; and indeed no Service is the better performed for perpetual, unseemly Chidings and Upbraiding. Good Words are so handsome, and becoming

reason

reasonable religious People, that they should be first tried, and as long continued as possible. And no doubt, Servants perform their Duty better, and live more comfortably, with good Words. But besides good Words, Servants must also have good Usage. Masters should not be over rigorous in their Punishments of Servants Faults, but ought to inflict them with Deliberation, good Intention, and Compassion. Anger often produces sad Effects. Masters indeed owe their Servants Admonition and Reproof, when faulty, and Punishments in Proportion to their Guilt; but then Masters are to be moderate in their Commands and Impositions, not to oppress them with immoderate Tasks and Labour, but are to have a merciful Regard to the Capacity, Ability, and Strength of Servants. It was one Reason of instituting the Sabbath to the *Jews*, that Servants might be relieved, and not consume a miserable Life in constant and continued Labour. No doubt, the Servants Time and Labour are the Masters, but yet they are to be exacted with Equity and Reason: A Servant is not to be consumed with Toil, as to be unfit for further Service. He is not supposed to consent to such a Bargain, tho' still all his Time and Labour belongs to his Master; therefore whoever requires their Labour and Pains, without any Rest or Intermision, does not deal *equally* with Servants. And under this Head may be comprehended, due Care of them in Health and Sickness, the giving them prudent Advice and good Example, affording them Opportunities to serve God, both at home and abroad; the instructing them

them in the common Rules of Honesty and Justice, Truth and Faithfulness; exciting and encouraging them to Diligence and Industry, to make them virtuous and religious, that they may be as useful in the World, as they can; and in Case of Sicknes, not to let them want what is fitting. These are the most likely Methods to make good Servants, to encourage such as are so, and to oblige them to serve their Masters with all possible Care and Affection. Such Particulars as these, *St. Paul*, no doubt, meant, when he would have Masters give their Servants that which is just and equal.

The Reason assigned, why Masters should do so, is next to be considered; and that is, *knowing that they also have a Master in Heaven*. This Master is the Lord *Christ*, who shall judge the Quick and Dead, and punish or reward without Respect of Persons; which being considered, 'tis certain the Words intend, both an Encouragement to those that comply with the Command, and Threatening to such as neglect it. As they contain an Encouragement, they may be thus understood, *Masters, give to your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing, (or remembering) that ye have also a Master in Heaven; one* from whom you expect the just Performance of all those great and precious Promises, which he hath graciously made you; *one*, from whom you may look for all the Mercies and Benefits, both temporal and spiritual, that are either fit for him to give, or you to receive; and *one* who hath promised to be a bountiful Master to all his faithful and obedient Servants;

to shew Mercy to such, as shew Mercy to others. As he took on himself the Form of a Servant, lived a mean precarious Life, depending on the Charity and Friendship of good People for his Subsistence ; therefore hath he exempted every other poor and mean Condition from Shame and Reproach among *Christians*, and made them, for his Sake, rather Objects of great Pity and Compassion. *Behold*, saith our Saviour, *I am among you, as he that serveth* ; not only to give his Disciples an Example of Humility and Condescension, on just Occasions, but to sanctify all Conditions of Life, and to shew the World that God respects not Persons ; that he regards not Birth and Fortune, Quality and Title, but that the meanest People are acceptable with him, if they do his Will, and obey his Law. That it is Goodness, Virtue, and Religion, which recommend Men to his Favour, and nothing else ; of which poor Servants are as capable as the rich, mighty, and most honourable Masters. And as he hath made them Partakers of the same Grace here, and capable of the same Glory hereafter, so he commands them to be treated with all Mercy and Humanity ; on this Principle, no doubt, that all should be as happy as they can. This is what every single Person should govern himself by ; namely, to make every one as easy and happy in the Condition he is, as possible ; not to molest, afflict, or injure any ; but to do Justice, and shew all the Mercy we can, consistent with our own Benefit ; more especially to whom we are related. Our Master, that is in Heaven, hath, by his Laws, more consulted the Ease and Benefit of all

inferior Relations, than either *Jewish*, *Greek*, or *Roman* Law-givers ever did; their Condition is much more happy under *Christianity*, than under any other Dispensation. The State of Subjects under their Princes, the Subjection of Wives to their Husbands, of Children to their Parents, of Servants to their Masters, is abundantly more easy by the Rules and Principles of that Religion, than to any other People; that is, *Christianity* hath better provided for their Ease and Comfort, if those that are concerned will follow its Directions. *Christianity* is the best Religion that ever was, for the Good of Mankind; it best secures the Rights and Honours, Privileges and Advantages of all Superiors, and best consults the Ease and Happiness of all Inferiors, by the most strict and indispensable Obligations it lays on all Men, to be exceeding just and merciful, and to discharge their respective Duties with the utmost Care and Faithfulness that can be. And this it does beyond all other Dispensations, by Promises of Grace and Favour here, and of mighty Rewards in the World to come. This End it also aims at and pursues, by threatening the greatest Punishments, to such as neglect their several Duties; for that is implied in the Words of the Text, *knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven*: That is, Let Masters do their Duty to their Servants; and give them what is just and equal, remembering they also have a Master in Heaven who commands this, and will one Day take an Account of their Behaviour. With this their Master there is no Respect of Persons; the Bond and Free are to him alike, the meanest Servant

as dear to him, as the most honourable Master ; all shall be most impartially judged alike ; the false and disobedient Servant shall be punished, and so will all unjust and cruel Masters.

And what can more demonstrate the Excellence and Usefulness of the *Christian* Religion, than the Care it takes to secure the Happiness of all the World, by promising such Rewards and Punishments to the right Performance of all relative Duties, natural and civil ? Be but a just and good Prince, and you shall be loved and feared by all your Subject ; be an obedient Subject, and you shall live secure from Rods and Axes. Be a good Father, and you shall have obedient Children, that will be your great Comfort ; be a good Child, and you shall be loved by your Parents, and all that know you ; be disobedient and rebellious, and you shall be rejected, disinherited, and punished. Be a good Husband, and you shall live easily, and be loved and honoured by your Wife ; be an unkind and false one, and you shall be hated and despised. Be a good Wife, and you shall be loved and praised ; be a bad one, and you shall be ill used, or divorced. Be a good Master, and you shall be well served ; be unjust and cruel, and all shall hate and fly from you. Be a good Servant, and you shall be well used ; be a bad and faithless one, and expect the Mill, the Mines, or a Halter. These are the Hopes and Fears, the Promises and Threats, that other Laws and Dispensations propose, to bind Men to their several Duties, and to deter them from neglecting them ; but what Security is this, what the *Christian* Doctrine offers, when, to

the faithful, just, and true Discharge of all Mens Duties, it promises all the natural Advantages of doing well, and everlasting Happiness besides? And to the Contempt and Neglect of all these Duties, besides the natural Inconveniencies and Mischiefs of doing Evil, it threatens endless and amazing Punishments? What great Encouragements to good Morality are these, what Discouragements to bad? Let it be allowed, as all must, that the true and honest Discharge of every Man's Duty to each other, in the Relation they stand, is the surest Way to make and keep all Men easy and happy; and then it will appear, that nothing ever so consulted the Good of all Mankind, even in this Life, as the *Christian* Religion. This proves how great a Part, indeed almost the Whole of true Religion, good Morality makes up, to which the Rewards discovered by Revelation are affixed, and to the Neglect whereof, the Punishments revealed are also threatened. Let none therefore think it indifferent, whether they well or ill discharge the Duties of their several Relations, for was Religion divided into Parts, the Duties that we owe to one another, would make up five of six, and for which Heaven is to reward our good Performance, and Hell to punish the Neglect of them. Let a Man take Care to have a due Regard to Justice, and live in Obedience to the Laws, as a good Subject; approve himself a dutiful Son to his Parents, and a good Parent to his Children; a faithful, good-natured, and careful Husband to his Wife; a just and equal Master to his Servants; a good, diligent, and honest Servant to his Masters;

Masters ; let him discharge with Care and good Conscience the Duties of his different Relations, and then see, how much he will want of being a good *Christian*. If these were well performed, the rest of our Religion would go down with Ease ; the Scruples and Objections made to Doctrines, would go near to vanish, if our disorderly Wills and Affections were once subdued to Reason, and we were truly just and honest, Men of Probity and good Morals ; for that indeed is the Life and Substance of *Christ's* Religion, and in the Sense and full Persuasion of this, I have been so long insisting on the several Duties that we owe to one another.





DISCOURSE XI.

Against SELF-MURDER.

2 SAM. xvii. 23.

And when Ahitophel saw that his Counsel was not followed, he saddled his Ass, and arose, and gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in Order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Fathers.



THESE Words contain a plain Account of what happened to a most unfortunate, and wicked Man; and to make them as useful as possible, it may be proper to consider, *First*, his sad and miserable End; *Secondly*, the Occasion of it; *Thirdly*, what was previous to his Execution; and *Fourthly*, what followed after.

The sad and miserable End, that *Ahitophel* came to, was, that *he hanged himself*. This was a Death of great Infamy; *Deut. xxi. 23. He that is, hanged, is accursed of God*, not for dying, but for deserving to die in that Manner. The being hanged on a Tree denoted some great Offence,

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Offence, deserving that Punishment, which had incurred the divine Displeasure. It was the Crime, and not the Punishment, which made such *accursed of God*. This Death *Ahitophel* underwent, not by any Sentence of Law, but by his own Choice ; and tho' he avoided the Ignominy of such a *Sentence*, yet he did not the Infamy of the *Death*. It being an ignominious, accursed Death, appointed for notorious Malefactors. The Thing to be *principally* considered, is not, why he died in *this* Manner, but what Right he had to end his Life by hanging himself : For to do this without Blame, a Person ought to be at Liberty by the Laws of God and Man, and independent on both ; there must be no Obligation on him, either from the Law of Nature and right Reason, or the revealed Law of God, or his lawful Superiors on Earth ; for if any of these withhold his Hands, he cannot innocently lay them on himself. As to the Law of Nature condemning this Practice, I will not so much appeal to that innate Love of Life, and Fear of Death, which is generally implanted in all Men ; (for such as these, having not those Affections, will deny their Power) as to that universal Abhorrence, which all Nations have had of this Practice ; and the more wise, civil, and polite any Nations have been, the more have they condemned it ; which is a strong Argument against it. And tho' there are Examples both of *Greeks* and *Romans*, who fell by their own Hands on some pressing Extremities, yet their *Rules*, *Laws*, and *Reasonings* were all against it ; and those Examples are of no more Authority to coun-

tenance such a Practice, than the Example of Men committing any *other* Wickedness will justify them against their Reason, and the express Command of God. Their Rules and Laws were against Adultery, Rapes, Violence, Oppression, and all Injustice; yet their great Ones were guilty of them all, and their Historians often mention them without Reproach or Blame: But a Man would be much mistaken, if he thought this was the Judgment of their wise and sober Writers, or of the grave and serious Part that governed them; or that such Practices were countenanced by their Laws and Rules of Living. I mention this to obviate an Objection, namely, that there are many Passages to be found in the Writings of these People, in Commendation of such, as have ended their Lives by their own Hands; it being no Wonder, for Men of loose Principles to have false Notions of Liberty and Honour, and to commend a Practice that is conformable thereto. In our Age, there are some that will justify any Thing, tho' ever so extravagant, impious, and unreasonable, as well as in former Times; and yet we should be unwilling to have Posterity believe, that this was, in general, the Sense, Reason, Understanding, and Judgment of our Age. We ought to consult the wise, sober, and serious Writers of the Times; the Laws, Rules, and Reasonings of the grave and governing Part of a Nation, to know their true Sense of all material Points; and we shall from thence learn, that *Self-murther* was ever an abhorred Practice; that whatever Pretence it made to great Honour, Magnanimity, and Courage,

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rage, it was indeed but an Effect of Cowardice, Fear, and an impatient Spirit, that could not bear the common Calamities and Misfortunes of Life. Certain it is, that the considering, virtuous, and religious Part of Mankind were ever of this Opinion, and condemned the Practice of those, who, to avoid some Misfortunes, have, before their Time, ended their Days by Violence : But to find Examples, and Defenders of this Practice among the *Gentiles*, need not be wondered at, because many of them were *Atheists*, or Believers in many Gods, which is much the same. Such as acknowledge no supreme Power who governs the World, and to whom Men are accountable for what they do, 'tis in vain to urge the Laws of Nature and right Reason ; for let them be never so clear and plain, that will not signify, if they may be transgressed, without Fear of any Power to punish such Offences. When a Man believes no one can call him to an Account hereafter, he will fear no Master or Superior on Earth, because he can so easily escape by Death. But I am now supposing the Belief of God ; and admitting that, no Man has a Right to take away his Life at Pleasure, without Regard to God's Will, which is written in our Hearts, forbidding a Practice, that all the best Lawgivers and Writers, of the wisest and most civilized People in all Ages, do also concur in Consent to condemn. This I take to be one very good Proof.

As to any particular Declaration of God's Will concerning *this*, in the written Revelation, it cannot be expected, that every single Sin a

Man commits, should be prohibited, when a general Prohibition includes them all: And, *Thou shalt do no Murther*; is that general one, which secures the Life of every one, unless forfeited to Justice by some other Command, as in the Case of *Theft*, and such other Offences, to which Death is due by the Laws of God. But, say some, this Command only respects our *Neighbour*, and not a Man's Self. To which I answer, that if the Letter and Sense of the Command will reach to a Man's Self, as well as his Neighbour, why should not the Command include both? A Man is murdered, when he murders himself; and Murther is prohibited. And tho' the *second Table* of the Law more particularly refers to our Neighbour, yet not exclusively of ourselves. We may not bear false Witness against ourselves, no more than against our Neighbours. By Neighbour here is meant, one that is truly injured by our Offence, as well as the Party immediately concerned. Thus when a wicked Man abuses his Neighbour's Bed, he not only offends against the Partner of his Sin, the adulterous Woman, but also against the injured Husband, and his own Wife, if he have one. Nay, he offends against the Parents and Relations also of his wicked Accomplice, dishonouring their Name, and filling the Family with Grief and Shame. When a Man steals, he not only offends against the Party whom he immediately wrongs, but also against those, who suffer by that Wrong. When any one, by false Witness, defeats a Man's Title to his Estate, Office, or Employ, does he not offend against the Wife and Children of that Man,

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Man, who lived by the one or other, as well as against the Man himself? So that each Commandment respects more than *one* Party, under the Notion of *Neighbour*, even *all* that are injured by any Transgression. And the same as to the sixth Commandment, where a Man murders his Neighbour. Are not the Wife, Children, and Family made miserable by such a Death? And does not the same Mischief follow to one's *own* Family, by a Self-Murder, as to another Family, by the Murder of another? And if so, the sixth Commandment as certainly forbids Self-Murder, as the Murder of another; because it forbids the *Consequences* of Self-Murder, which are Shame, Grief, Loss, Pain, and Injury, as much as it forbids the Consequences of murdering any one besides. For a Man is no more at Liberty to injure and afflict his own House and Relations, than those who are Strangers to him; because, by taking away his own Life, the Consequences are full as calamitous to his own Family, by such a Stroke, as to another Family, deprived of a like Relation. God not only prohibits the single Acts of Adultery, Theft, and false Witness, but also the wicked Consequences; and these Consequences are the same with God, and as much to be regarded by Men, as the prime Mischief and Occasion of them. Tho' a Man was weary of Life, and as willingly sought for Death, as People in Pain for Ease, and the Weary for Rest and Sleep, yet it would be utterly unlawful to satisfy his Desire by killing him; because it would be *Murder*, tho' he was desirous of dying, and also occasion

casion much Mischief to the Family. Murder does not barely consist in Violence offered *against a Person's Will*, but in taking away a Life, that no one has a Right to do, by the Laws of God or Man. No one has a Right to take away his own Life, and therefore can convey no such Right to another. Was any Man Master of his own Life, to lay it down at Pleasure by God's Law, he might dispose of it as he pleased; but he cannot empower another to kill him, because, by the Law of God, he has no Power to kill himself. Therefore to kill a Man, tho' desirous to be killed, is Murder before God; *First*, because no Man has Power to give such Consent. *Secondly*, because Mischief may be done to one that is consenting to it; and *Thirdly*, for that Murder, as well as other Crimes, has Respect to the Injuries and Mischiefs that other People suffer, as well as to those immediately inflicted on the Party concerned. It deprives *other* People of the Assistance, Help, and Comfort, which that Life either did, or might afford. So that it is plain, a Man's Life is not his own, to do as he pleases with it. For supposing him at Liberty to do this, as to his single Self, yet his Duty and Obligation to his Relations would constrain him not to do it; and this by the Law of God, even the sixth Commandment, which forbids the Injuries and Mischiefs consequential on Murder, as well as the Murder itself.

In the next Place, I observe, that both *Jews* and *Christians*, few or none excepted, have ever condemned this Practice, thinking it in general
forbid

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forbid by the sixth Commandment, and other Passages in Scripture: Nay, 'tis acknowledged by them, that to do Violence to one's own Life, was to act against Reason and natural Religion, was the withdrawing our Obedience from our supreme Commander, withstanding his Will, distrusting his Care and Providence, and betraying an impatient effeminate Mind, as not being able to bear the common Accidents of Life. So that this Practice hath been always condemned by People of all Religions, and pursued with great Abhorrence, and by the *Christian* Religion especially, with dreadful Sentences. And every one then should seriously consider, what Obligations a Consent so general and reasonable, ought to lay upon him. To think it is not forbidden by God to destroy the Works of his Hands, because Self-Murther is not expressly named, is to say we are at Liberty to commit many other hateful Crimes, that are not specified in particular, but are concluded under general Heads. When God says to NOAH, *Gen. ix. 6 Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed; for in the Image of God made he Man*; 'tis plain, that the Reason of the Prohibition holds as strong against *Self-Murther*, as against the Killing any other Man. For if I must not shed the Blood of another Man, because he is made in the *Image of God*, I must not shed the Blood of my own *Self*, because I also am a Man, and made in the *Image of God*, as well as he. But the Reason, why *Self-Murther* is not expressly prohibited by Name, is, that whatever Sins and Offences, God as a Law-giver prohibits, he does it with a Penalty;

nalty; he affixes a certain Punishment to every Crime, which the Person committing it, is to suffer in this World, whether it be Restitution, Loss of Limb, or Life itself. But as *Self-Murther* prevents all Punishment, so does it all *threatning*, and all Laws: Neither God, nor Magistrate can prohibit *Self-Murther* with any Penalty, that can affect the Criminal himself; because, by his very Crime, he escapes all temporal Punishment in Person. This is the Reason why *Self-Murther* was not prohibited by Name, by God's Command. No Law can to any Purpose be enacted without a Penalty, and where that cannot be, there can be no Law. But *Self-Murther* prevents all Penalty, and therefore wants no particular Prohibition; it being included under general Commands, and forbidden as a Sin, of which God only will take Cognizance, and that in another World. It is most certain then, that *Self-Murther* is forbidden by God in general, and by Consequence in many Places of Scripture. Besides, it is really irreconcilable with that Patience, Resignation, and Submission to the Will of God, in all Conditions of Life, however sad and calamitous, that the *Christian* Religion requires of its Professors. The Thought of destroying one's self is a most fatal Mistake, fruitful of all ill Consequences, and contrary to all the Wisdom and Religion in the World.

Let such only consider the mischievous and injurious Effects thereof to other People. By throwing away a valuable, useful Life, it is sometimes a great Loss to the Public; always
 Scandal

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Scandal and Offence taken, and some are misled by such Examples. But who can express the Pain and Grief, Shame and Confusion, of all the surviving innocent Relations? even natural and easy Deaths create a deal of Sorrow, and make human Life, short as it is, more tedious and full of Trouble. Sudden and accidental Deaths affect us yet deeper, and are still worse, when sad and calamitous. But when 'tis violent and deliberate, they perfectly oppress and overwhelm us. Does this look like Piety to Parents, or Kindness to Wife and Children? and yet this is the Return that *such* unnatural Children make to Fathers and Mothers if living, the Dowry *such* Husbands leave their Wives, the Patrimony *such* Fathers convey to their Descendants. If any human Consideration could restrain these cruel Violences; it should be that of saving so much Pain, Sorrow, and Torment, which is unavoidably occasioned, by leaving their best and nearest Friends in such a Manner. Is it so hard to bear a little Poverty, Shame, Reproach, or Infamy, as better to die, than venture to endure them? And when *such* a Death will entail on the Family and Relations, the Reproaches, Revilings, and ill Usage of a relentless, insulting, and uncharitable World, who will load them with the Infamy and Dishonour, that *such* leave them. But above all, with what perplexing Doubts and Fears, amazing and distracting Thoughts, does *Self-Murder* fill the Minds of Relations and Friends, as to their Condition in the other World? whose Grief is equal to their Love, and lasting as their Life. It was to be wished, that

that these unhappy People, when they forget God and themselves, would yet permit the Sense of Duty, which they owe their best Friends and nearest Relations, to dwell on their Minds; and that they would be content to live, at least till they can die, without doing Wrong or Mischief to *other People*.

As to this *Ahithophel*, he was a *Jew*, a Man of Birth and good Education, the King's Counsellor, and esteemed so wise, that whoever advised with him, was as if he had *enquired at the Oracle of God*. That one thus qualified should dare so to die, is very strange and unaccountable; and yet *AHITHOPHEL'S Self-Murder* was not near so wicked and audacious, as such an Attempt in an understanding educated *Christian*; to whom the Will of God is revealed with equal Certainty, but with much greater Arguments and Motives to deter from Sin, and encourage Obedience. A *Christian* that believes in God, the Immortality of the Soul, in a Life to come; *one* that believes the Wrath of God is revealed against all Unrighteousness; that without Repentance no Man's Sins can be forgiven; that after Death there is no Repentance, but the Tree lies as it falls: That such a Man, professing the Faith of *Christ* crucified, and covenanting with God in Baptism, to take up the Cross, and bear it, if need be, to Death; should, in the Impatience of his Soul, when pressed with some little more than ordinary Calamity, deliberately chuse to throw this Burden off, by committing a Sin, of which he knows he can never *repent*; and venture the most dreadful Consequence

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sequence thereof, to eternal Ages, is what none could believe, did not the frequent Practice of such unhappy People convince us of it. But 'tis in truth a great Reproach to Reason and *Christ's* Religion, and no little Dishonour to our Nation, which affords more Examples of this kind than any other, tho' much larger. Indeed, some impute this vile Practice to our Climate, Diet, Liberty, and way of living; but no Excuse for it ought to be admitted. 'Tis a Practice to be abhorred and condemned with all our Zeal, to be guarded against with all our Care and Prudence; all our Reason and Religion; and we ought to make our constant Prayers to God, for his preventing and assisting Grace, that no Temptations to such Impiety may ever prevail on us.

The *second* Thing to be considered, is the Occasion of *Ahithophel's Self-Murder*, which was, that he *saw his Counsel was not followed*. This Counsel related to *Absalom*, as to his Difference with his Father *David*. The History of which may be seen in 2 *Sam.* the 16th and 17th Chapters. There were two Things that gave *Ahithophel* this Discontent. *First*, to see his Counsel not followed, but another Man's preferred before his, which had been held in the greatest Esteem; a Disgrace that Statesmen know not how to bear. *Secondly*, he saw the Consequences of his Counsel being rejected, and that the Party he turned to would be ruined thro' the Advice of *Hushai* the *Archite*. He knew where the Storm would at last fall, even on himself, who had given such wicked Counsel, that had it been pursued, *David* must have been
been

been lost. For this, he knew, when *David* returned with Victory, would cost him his Life; and therefore resolves to prevent *David's* Stroke by *one* of his *own*. So that the Sense of past Disgrace, in having his Counsel rejected, and fearing farther Shame and Pain, were the Occasion of this desperate Resolution, to lay violent Hands on himself. When Men engage in any wicked Practice, as *Ahithophel* did, and find themselves disappointed, and they are brought to Shame, or into Danger, their Stomach is so high, their Pride so great, that they can't bear the Thought, of *what the World will think or say of them*. They fancy all observe their Actions, and when they miscarry, that all Men censure, reproach, and condemn them. They can *bear* their *guilt*, but not the *Shame*. However, this Example should teach all to be extremely careful how they engage in Matters of great Difficulty or Danger, lest the Disappointment is too much for them; and that not only in Things wicked and forbidden, but in all others, where the Event, if not successful, may prove of ill Consequence, for none know the Strength or Weakness of their Minds in great Trials. And since the Accidents of Life are neither to be foreseen, nor prevented, we should have our Minds and Affections so prepared and subdued, that tho' common Calamities may surprize us, yet they may not confound us so as to give up our Reason to the Government of Passion, which is generally the Case of *Self-Murtherers*. Their Passions being always high, and ever indulged, they cannot bear Loss or Disappointment, but
when

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when they fall from their former Condition, abandon themselves to Sorrow and Despair. The Cause of all this is, that they place their whole Happiness in possessing Riches and Honours, in the Praise and Approbation of Men; and when these fly away, their Hearts fail. When they lose their Credit, Esteem, and Reputation, whether deservedly or no, they are dejected, fear every Eye views them with Contempt, and that every Tongue is ever reproaching them, which makes them ashamed of Light, and weary of living.

Riches indeed are of great Use to make Life easy, but Man's Happiness depends not on abundance of Wealth. However, let all get what they can with Innocence and Honesty, with Virtue and the Fear of God; and keep what they can with Justice to their Neighbour, and Charity to the Poor. But the Poverty which is sometimes the dreadful Occasion of *Self-Murther*, is not so much the Want of Riches, but the losing by Accident or vicious living, what they formerly had. 'Tis the Remembrance of our former Affluence, that makes our present Want insupportable, even when we are undone by unforeseen Accidents. And tho' such Poverty is attended with all Men's Pity, yet sometimes a Man will so lay it to Heart, as not to endure living under it, than which nothing is more weak and unreasonable, tho' it was not sinful; for ought the Life of Man to lie at the Mercy of every Accident, that may deprive him of his temporal Estate? The Misery should seem much greater, where our own Vice and Ill-husbandry reduced

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us to such Extremity, for there we find ourselves in fault. When the Providence of God afflicts us, we submit to that ; when the Malice of Men afflicts us, we lay the Fault there ; and when we afflict ourselves, we cannot help condemning ourselves. But when Men have ruined themselves and Families, by Folly and wicked Courses, the Reflection is often so sharp, that with all their Courage they cannot bear up under it ; and tho' it may not end in such deadly Violences, yet it generally does in sottish, loose, and wicked Courses. So that a careful, sober, frugal Life, is the only Preservative against that furious, violent Grief, which the Sense of such a faulty Poverty often throws Men into. A little Wisdom, moderate Resolutions, and Strength of Mind, will keep a Man in the Ways of Goodness and Virtue ; when much of every one will hardly recal him, when he has once wandered. No one knows what an Alteration of Mind a Change of Fortune may make. Let every one then in Time take Care to avoid the dangerous Experiment. But when People have brought themselves to a Morsel of Bread, it is a very ill Way to repair their past Folly and Wickedness, by doing an Act that will exceed them all, as much as Heaven is higher than the Earth. For *Self-Murder* is a Sin that admits of no Repentance, but consigns them to Pains and Sorrows that will have no End. The only Way to prevent such Temptations, is to live in Sobriety, Temperance, and with decent Frugality.

Dignities and Offices of Honour are also not only useful, but absolutely necessary to the Peace,

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Peace, Order, and good Government of the World; and are Matter of a very lawful laudable Ambition. But then Men shew very weak Minds, to be tied so close to these Employments and Honours, as not to be able to part with them; or that the Loss should occasion such Sadness, as too often to precipitate their Death, and sometimes by Violence. Lastly, Credit, Esteem, and Reputation are so useful to the well being of Men, that all possible Care should be taken to gain and secure them. Nothing is more easy to the Mind, nor more useful in all our Affairs, than that others should think well of us; and most Men are so extremely careful to preserve and defend their Reputation and good Name, that it is no wonder, if the Loss or Danger of it does much affect Men, and sensibly afflict them. And therefore an honest and prudent Man will take Care to keep up his Reputation; his Honesty will influence his Actions to make them just, and his Prudence to discharge them in the best Manner. But when Men have done something extremely unworthy of themselves, or wicked to others, to excite both Amazement and Abhorrence, in those who hear it; then there arises in their Minds such a Mixture of Grief and Shame, Fear, Remorse, and other Passions, that they cannot bear their own Thoughts; but to deliver themselves from such insupportable Oppression, they run headlong into Death, by the first Way their disordered Fancy prompts them. To prevent such dreadful Miseries, let all continue in the Paths of Reason and Virtue, and be guilty of no Extravagancies,

vagancies, or other ill Practices, whereby to draw the Hatred and Contempt of the World. For it is much easier to preserve ourselves from notorious Crimes and Follies, than when committed, to guard our Minds against their wicked Suggestions. A Man in Innocence has a mighty Command over himself, to what he has when Guilt, Shame, and Fear bewilder his Thoughts, dissipate all his Recollection, and enfeeble his Judgment. 'Tis more easy and safe to *prevent* Mischief, than *remedy* it. Reason is strong enough, when we are safe and free from any such Fears, and in no Danger of these Temptations; but when Men fall into those perilous Straits and Trials, they are generally deaf to Reason, and listen only to the Suggestions of their present Passions; they neither *answer* nor *regard* what is said. So that if they are not before prepared, to withstand such Assaults, they seldom do it, when the Danger comes. Let then all be persuaded to preserve themselves innocent and upright, not to engage in Things hazardous and difficult, for fear the Disappointment should be too much for them; it being abundantly more in their Power to do this, than when once guilty and involved, to deliver themselves from the distracted Counsels and Suggestions of their Minds, when the Judgment is perverted, and the Understanding overwhelmed with Misery, neither inclin'd to *ask*, nor *capable* of *taking* Counsel when offered.

As for such Persons as are drove to these sad Extremities, thro' religious Melancholy; let me desire them seriously to regard the following

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Considerations. That there is nothing more reasonable to believe, than that God is the very best of Beings. That he transcends all other Beings, as much in Goodness as in Power and Wisdom. That a Being thus absolutely and necessarily good, can never intend any thing unmerciful and cruel, which he certainly would do, did he make a Creature with Design to be unspeakably miserable, which cannot be done by him; for no Man ever was originally and primarily designed by God to be miserable in the next World, but only made capable of being so, by sinning voluntarily and deliberately. Let them also remember, that when Man fell into Sin, and must have perished in it, God was so transcendently merciful, as presently to promise, and in his own due time effected, the sending his only Son into the World, *that the World thro' him might be saved.* That this his Son did come into the World, to live for our Example and Instruction, and to die for our Redemption, thereby making Satisfaction to God, for all the Sins of the World; and who taught by himself and his Apostles, that whoever repented of their Sins, believed in *Jesus Christ*, were baptized, and lived in Obedience to God's Word, should certainly be forgiven and saved; all which are very inconsistent with *Predestination* to Wickedness and Punishment. By which *Scheme* of Cruelty and horrible Injustice, the whole Design of the Gospel is overturned. But 'tis easier to persuade People that God cannot *predestinate* any one to Misery, than when they are persuaded of such Doctrine, to divert them from the Consequences

quences of it, namely, either Carelessness, under Security of being predestinated to Life, or Despair, from the Certainty of being lost for ever. 'Tis indeed strange that any should believe such hard Things of God, who is Goodness itself; but when they do, they are capable of no Advice or Comfort. When a Man believes he lies under the Sentence of God's Wrath, and is sealed to Death by an irreversibile Decree, you may as well talk to the Waves of the Sea, or the Wind. And that such hard Opinions have no worse, or frequenter ill Consequences is solely owing to the Grace and Goodness of God.

Thus we see, that the Cause of *Ahitophel's* destroying himself, (and the same may be said of all others) was an unlawful Passion, and the Effect of Disappointment. It proceeds from Pride, that disdains Controul; Self-conceit, that will endure no Preference; Love of unlawful Pleasures, that renders the Mind incapable of bearing any Hardship or Calamity; Love of Riches, which makes Men fraudulent, or violent Oppressors, and puts them on shameful, wicked Practices; such Ambition of Honour as stirs Men up to obtain them by unlawful Methods; so that they beget Envy, and make People wish for their Fall. The Sense of which makes such haughty Minds, when fallen, the most abject, pitiful, and mean spirited that can be. But they who gain their Honours honestly, and use them moderately, will find Respect and Safety when they resign them. For Shame, Infamy, and Danger belong only to shameful, infamous, and injurious Practices. They who have done no
Evil

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Evil will be afraid of none. Let all but live in the Credit and Esteem that virtuous, honest Practices will give, and none will ever fly to Death, to deliver them from Disgrace and Infamy, Reproaches and despightful Usage.



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DISCOURSE XII.

2 S A M. xvii. 23.

And when Ahithophel saw that his Counsel was not followed, he saddled his Ass, and arose, and gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in Order, and hanged himself, and was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.



FROM these Words, I have already considered, *First*, the miserable End *Ahithophel* came to, namely, that he *hanged himself and died*; and shew'd how unlawful an Act that was in him, and would be so in any one besides. *Secondly*, the Occasion of it, because he *saw his Counsel was not followed*. And here I evinced, that such Wickedness was the Effect of some haughty Passion, irritating the Mind to such unreasonable and desperate Resolutions, of which we ought to take the greatest Care. I now proceed to consider, *Thirdly*, what was previous to this Fact. He *arose, gat him home to his House, to his City, and put his Household in Order*; which shews that he acted very *deliberately*. Had he been warned of God, that he should shortly die

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as King *Hezekiah* was, he could not have done otherwise than he did; *have risen, hasted home, and set his House in Order.*

Here is *one* Man, that seems to have destroyed himself with Deliberation, and without any visible Marks of Distraction; a Thing that seldom or never happens in our own Country. *Here* every one is supposed to be mad, that makes away himself; or otherwise he could not act so much, against the Principles of Self-Preservation, the Laws of Nature, Revelation, his own Interest and Honour. These are the Reflections our *Pity*, rather than our *Reason*, makes on such sad Occasions; and Pity rather to the *living* than the *dead*. And should the Laws of the Land take no Cognizance of these Violences, and such a Death have no Consequence, with respect to the temporal Estate of the surviving Relations, I believe ten to one would be *Self-murderers*. But is it not manifest, in all Cases besides this, that People can deliberately do themselves the greatest Mischiefs, without Suspicion of losing their Reason and Senses, as those Words in this Case signify? Do not Men daily venture to provoke God's Vengeance, by the most daring Impieties, with as much Understanding and Sobriety, as they shew in any other innocent Actions of their Lives? Do not they venture Liberty and Life by a thousand Villainies, which they every Day commit, by a Malice most propense and serious, and with a most studious Artifice, tho' they well know, that if discovered, their Heads must pay for it? Do not Men by Riot and Excess daily hazard

their Health and Life, tho' they know the Danger that will unavoidably ensue? And do we say these People are *distracted*, and excuse them by Loss of Reason and Understanding? I mean not that *Self-murderers* are no more mad, than all these other desperately wicked People are; but that to conclude a *Self-murderer* is therefore mad, because he acts like a Madman, against Nature, Reason, Religion, and Self-Preservation, is no right Conclusion; because by the same Rule all the most enormously wicked might be judged mad with equal Reason, since no doubt they act as much against all Principles of Reason and Self-Security, as the others. And yet the World does not conclude these wicked Persons mad; their Reason, Sense, and Understanding make them accountable to God and Man, and will most certainly condemn them.

Those who truly want their Sense and Understanding may fall into Mischief, and often do great Violence to themselves; but for the Generality they seek not this, as their *End*, but fall into it accidentally, as blind Men do into a Pit, and we may frequently see some great Failure in their Projects. But in the Violence I am arguing against, there is a fixed Design, an End most stedfastly pursued, Means most suitable and proper pitched on, and renewed with most obstinate Resolution, and repeated again on a Disappointment. There is hardly any Action of their Life carried on with more Contrivance, than that which is to put an End to it; and was the Design *right*, they would be esteemed rather *cunning* Men, than mad or senseless; so that these

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these People make their Judgment from the Event only, which is doubtless very wrong. For tho' the End be never so unreasonable, and wicked, yet a Man is not therefore mad, when he chuses it; but only unreasonable, and wicked. A Man is in some Sense mad, when under the Dominion of any Passion, and out of the Government of Reason; but because a Man's Reason is given him by God, to govern and keep his Passions in order, therefore none excuses the ill Effects of any Passions, by saying the *Person was mad*. And when one kills another with equal Deliberation, Preparation, and Contrivance, as some Men shew in dispatching themselves; it is not found *Manslaughter*, but *Murder*. There can be no Reason for this, but that in *Self-murder* no body else receives Damage, for whom the Jury might be concerned; which shews they rather consider the Mischief done, than the State and Disposition of Mind, with which it was done. I do not mean that they who commit these Violences on themselves are not sometimes deprived of their Sense and Reason, but that it is not so *always*. It might indeed be wished, that all *Self-Murderers* were truly distracted, rather than to act so, with Reason and Sense. But all the World knows the contrary, and that many go about this Business, as regularly and deliberately as *Athithophel* did; they *rise, get them to their own Home, and set their House in Order*, just as he did. They before resolve on it, pursue it steadily, sometimes justify this Practice, and defend it by Principles. And yet when it happens, 'tis the same as if they had

been suddenly seized with Frenzy, and distracted but an Hour before ; the *Jury* and *Coroners* see nothing but the sad Event, and in Commiseration to the surviving *Relations*, if any thing can be saved them, declare such distracted. And none *but a mad Man would destroy himself*, is all that is said, to justify such a Sentence ; which is not true, for they know the contrary. But out of Pity they spare the dead, to do some Kindness to the living.

Indeed too much Pity cannot well be shewn those, who are made miserable by such violent Deaths ; but possibly it would be of great Use, was less Pity shewn on such Occasions. The strictest Discipline in Camps is attended with fewer Executions, than where it is more remiss ; and a severe exacting Justice in Execution of the Laws, prevents many Offences in the civil State. There are fewer Duels in *France* than *England*, tho' the Country is much larger, and the People's Humours more volatile, and easy to be moved than ours. The Reason is very obvious and reproachful to us, *namely*, that few or none are ever pardoned, but Justice is *there* as blind and relentless, as the Rage of Men is *here*. And perhaps a severer Sentence on *Self-Murderers* would occasion fewer Instances. The utter Ruin of *some* few fatherless and Widows, might prevent a great many from being fatherless and Widows. The Laws of most wise Nations have had that in view, when they enacted Penalties. They have punished Wife and Children, and ruined Families, for the Offence of a single Person, the Head of them ; not for want of know-
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ing their Innocence, but with Intention to restrain those Heads within the Bounds of Duty, for Fear of their hurting those who were innocent, whom they were obliged to love, and secure from Want, Shame, and Misery, and make as happy as they could : Imitating herein the Example of God himself, who *will visit the Children to the third and fourth Generation, of them that hate him.* And it is Pity but that an Experiment of this Kind was sometimes made, to see if it would not more prevent these Misfortunes, than the merciful Methods now taken, to bring in all *Distracted*, and so neither punish the Dead with *Infamy*, nor the Living with any Loss of Estate and Goods. The Consideration of disgracing and undoing Wife, Children, and Family, is intended by the Laws to restrain Fathers of Houses from offending ; who would be more at Liberty, were they themselves *only* concerned, and did not involve near Relations in Ruin. And why should not this have its Influence also to prevent *Self-Murther*, if the Loss of all temporal Estate, to the Wife and Children, were sure to follow such Violence ? Probably, those who always shew *Mercy*, when *Justice* is due, encourage such Misfortunes by their Pity, and make Men sooner destroy themselves, because no worse Consequence ensues to their Relations, than if they died a natural Death. These Things deserve Consideration. For were some Examples wisely made, it might deter many *rash* and wicked Enterprizes of this Nature

And so might also what I am going to observe, under the *fourth* and *last* Head, concerning

what followed this wicked Fact of *Abithophel*, namely, *that he was buried in the Sepulchre of his Father.* Among the *Greeks*, it was generally received, says *Aristotle*, that the dead Bodies of *Self-Murtherers* should be disgraced; this they did, by denying them Burial. So when the *Milesian* Maids hanged themselves in great Numbers, the Magistrates, to repress this growing mad Humour, ordered them to be buried *naked*, with the Cords about their Necks, which they had used to that Purpose; and the Sense of this Dishonour had fortunately the intended Effect, for the rest were so affected with the shameful Spectacle, that they made no more Attempts of that Kind. And yet, *Gellius* from *Plutarch* says, that these poor Creatures laboured under some Distemper; but the Fear of such an infamous Burial brought them to their Senses: So that in most of these light Distractions, the Reason is not so entirely lost, but that such may be restrained, by some particular Considerations and Motives, of Love, Fear, Shame, or Honour. *Christians*, to shew their Abhorrence of this Practice, do also deny *Christian* Burial to those that lay violent Hands on themselves. It is so directed in the first *Rubrick*, before the *Burial Service*, which being confirmed by *Act of Parliament*, becomes a Law of the Land, as well as of the Church. They are there ranked with Persons *unbaptized* and *excommunicated*; so that our Church reckons *Self-Murtherers* not among the Number of the *Faithful*, nor has that Hope of them, as of other *Christian* Believers, who die in the Faith of *Christ*, and for ought appears, with Repen-



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Repentance; and therefore denies them the publick Prayers. And as the Church denied them *Christian* Burial, so the Civil Government did heretofore appoint, they should be put into the Earth, and left there with a lasting Mark of Infamy, by having a *Stake driven thro' them.*

But notwithstanding these Penalties of Church and State, to deter others from the like unnatural wicked Attempts, by such Disgraces and Dishonours to the Dead, they are now buried in the same Manner with good *Christians*, because they are brought in *Distracted.* And if really so, there is no Reason, why the Civil Power should mark them with Infamy, or the Church not have good Hope of them, who tho' unfortunate, are as much in God's Favour, as those who being visited with any other Distemper, die without their Reason and Senses. No one can with Reason conclude otherwise, to the Prejudice of People truly distracted; for they are not Masters of themselves, nor consequently accountable for their Actions. For *Revelation* being the Rule by which they are to walk, with Respect to God, and Reason being the Faculty or Power, by which they are to *apply* that Rule, this they cannot do, for Want of Reason. And since the Civil Power has placed it in a *Jury*, to determine whether a *Self-Murderer* is 'distracted, or not, I can't see, but that the Church must acquiesce in the Judgment such legally impowered Men think fit to give. I the rather observe this, to justify the Clergy, when any of these *Self-Murderers* are buried according to Form: They are directed by the publick Judgment, and not their private Opi-

nion. For should a Man be accidentally found dead, and the *Jury* bring him in guilty of *Self-Murther*, the Minister, tho' he believes the contrary, yet must not bury him according to Form, because the Law is his Rule of acting. But tho' the Law says, that *Self-Murtherers* shall not be buried in such a Manner, yet it does not determine *who* are *Self-Murtherers*, but leaves that to particular Persons, from whom the Minister is to know who are Self-Murtherers, and not from his own, or the publick Opinion. As to true Distraction, which is as innocent and blameless, as any other Ignorance or Mistake, the Church will not deny her *Christian* Offices to such an one; and therefore if a *Christian*, truly distracted, lays violent Hands on himself, she may hope as well of him, as of one who died a violent Death by Poison thro' Ignorance, or by falling from a Precipice, or by accidental Shot, and consequently bury him in Form. This I think will justify the Clergy from contracting any Irregularity, by burying in Form those who are brought in Distracted, as well as it will the Civil Officers for not seizing on the Estate and Effects of the Deceased, which are forfeited by Law, if they were not distracted; tho' both Civil and Ecclesiastical Ministers may be persuaded, that the Parties deceased were indeed Self-Murtherers; because the Laws do not trust them to *judge*, but to *execute* according to the Judgment of other People. So that the whole Matter devolves on the *Jury*. And therefore, if the constant Mitigation of the Rigours of the Law, against Self-Murtherers, any way encourage that Practice, it will behove the
Jury

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Jury to consider well, whether the favourable Verdict they generally bring in, is always so righteous and seasonable, as they imagine. Or, since the Wisdom of the Laws intends, that the Confiscation of Estates, the Undoing a Family, the shameful Burial she appoints, and the Denial of *Christian* Offices, should deter Men from such horrible Attempts; whether that the Mercy which so constantly defeats all these Intentions, is not more likely to continue, than repress these cruel Violences? This deserves to be more considered than it is. For such is the natural Affection a Man bears to his Wife, Children, and Family; such is the Respect he has to his own Fame, and bears to his dead Body, that, was he sure his Estate would be forfeited, and lost to his Family; himself buried in the Highway with a Stake drove thro' him, as a Mark of Infamy, and not to be buried like a *Christian*; perhaps he might be content to bear his Shame, Pain, or Loss, till God saw fit to end his Sufferings by natural Means. An Instance or two of such Severity, as is legal, well and wisely chosen, might prove a greater Preservative against these Violences, than such a constant and expected Mercy, as we always find, on these Occasions. For Men have now no Fear of *Laws*, and when they have laid aside the Fear of God, they go about this Wickedness with great Readiness; they are sure of Favour in *this* World, and they will venture the *other*.

The riotous and loose Livers, and those who have justified and defended such Practices, would best deserve to be made such Examples of, for they

they would have the least Pity from the serious Part of Mankind; and such Punishment might be a Check to others, keep them within Bounds, and make them better Husbands, which is a Thing of great Consequence; Frugality being the Parent of many Virtues, and a Restraint to many Vices and Enormities. And if such as justified these Practices whilst living, were sure to be made Examples of, before others, it might hinder many from taking such Liberties in Discourse, and thereby encouraging those, who otherwise would not be so forward. There would still be Room enough for Pity, and a tender Regard to such, whose unhappy Constitution, Make, Frame, and wrong Education; false and mistaken Principles; great Weakness of Body and Mind; long and continued Pains; dreadful and amazing Calamities, have driven to these Extremities. If Laws and Rules are ever to be broken, it should be for such, whose Miseries entitle them to all the World's Pity, and who have lived a regular, sober, virtuous, nay, and religious Life. There may be Room to believe, the violent Deaths of such might proceed from incurable Melancholy, and true Distraction; and not from sudden, desperate, and impious Resolutions, which are usually the Fruits of a luxurious, vicious, and wicked Life. Indeed, without Religion, both Reason and Virtue will be found deficient, under these Temptations; if Reason and Virtue can ever be found, without Religion. Take away the Belief of God, the Life of the Soul, and of Rewards and Punishments in the other World; and the Miseries of this Life may, some-

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sometimes be so pushing, that the strongest Reasoning will hardly make it tolerable. But when a Man considers that he is a Creature of God's making, subject to his Laws and Government; and to the common Dispensations of his Providence, and tied by Command not to withdraw himself from the Service appointed him; and if a *Christian*, by voluntary Undertaking, bound to submit to God's Will in all Conditions of Life, to accept the evil with the good; when he considers there is also a Life to come, where there is no flying from God; such Considerations, by the Grace of God, will vanquish the strongest Temptations. We must oppose the Will and Command of God to the Desires of present Ease in our Distress, and the future Mischiefs of his Displeasure to those we labour under, let them be Fear, Pain, or Shame: And we shall then see, that the short Afflictions which are here, but as it were for a Moment, are not to be compared with the Wrath of God, which abideth for ever.

As for those unhappy People, who lying under the dreadful Apprehension of God's Anger, thinking themselves *Vessels of Wrath, and fitted for Destruction*; and not being able to bear the Torment of that Thought, put an End to their miserable Lives; as they are most to be pitied when alive, so there is the greatest Reason to spare them when dead; because this seems to be meer Distraction. Thus have I considered the Case of *Self-Murther*, which appears to be, not only a mighty Misfortune, but also, where Men have their Sense and Reason, a great and crying Sin; and which, according to the Gospel Covenant,
excludes

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excludes our Hope, by cutting off Repentance, upon which it is grounded. If there is any Room for Charity, it is this, that tho' all we see is wrong, yet we may not see all that truly is, in the Condition of these poor People; but God *does*, who is infinitely merciful, and will doubtless consider, with his usual Goodness, all that can possibly deserve his Pity and Forgiveness. And tho' he is just, yet his Justice is tempered with such Mercy, that even the most provoking Sinner may desire, with *David*, *rather to fall into the Hands of God, than Man.*



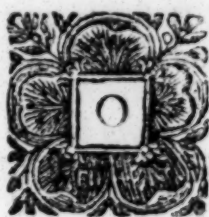
PRAY.



PRAYERS.

A Prayer for Parents on Behalf of their Children.

N. B. *If only one Child, say he, him, his, or her, instead of they, them, and their.*



MOST merciful Father, whose gracious Providence is ever watchful over us; I humbly beg Leave to recommend my dear *Children* to thy Care and Protection. Defend *them*, O Lord, I beseech thee, against the Evils and Temptations of this World, and make *them* constantly to obey thy holy Will and Commandments. Take Possession of *their Hearts*, and season *their* tender Years with thy heavenly Grace. And as *they* grow older, fortify *their* Minds against the Power of every Allurement to Sin; that *they* being innocent, devout, and pious, may always live as thy dutiful, and obedient *Children*. Be thou, O God, a gracious Father and merciful Provider for *them*, in all States and Conditions of Life. So dispose of *them* and *their* Affairs, as may most tend to promote thy Glory, and *their* own everlasting Salvation.

O

O Lord, make me a kind and tender Parent, neither too indulgent nor severe. Assist me by thy good Spirit, to form in *their* Minds the Principles of Virtue and Religion ; to teach *them* to remember thee *their* Creator in the Days of *their* Youth ; and to bring *them* up in thy Fear and Love. Let it be my constant Care and Endeavour to wean *them* from Pride and Vanity ; and by a sober, discreet, devout Behaviour and Conversation, to be an Example to *them*, of a holy and religious Life. Incline *them* to reverence *their* Parents, Governours, and Teachers ; and dispose *their* Hearts to be dutiful and obedient to them, to receive and obey their Instructions. Direct me to proper Methods for *their* Education, and enable me to place *them* in such Business and Employments, as may be most fit and useful for *them*.

And shouldst thou be pleased to take *them* hence before me, O so fit and prepare *them* for thyself, as that *they* may find Mercy with thee ; and make me willing to resign *them*. But if thou hast determined to remove me first out of this World, I humbly beg Leave to recommend *them*, with the more ardent Affection, to thy infinite Mercy and Compassion. Keep *them* from all the Evils of this Life ; conduct and bring *them* safe to thine everlasting Kingdom. Bless *them* also, I pray thee, in *their* temporal Concerns, that *they* may enjoy Things necessary and convenient for *them*, so as to make *their* earthly Abode easy and agreeable. But above all, take Care, I beseech thee, of *their* immortal Souls, and bless *them* with heavenly Treasures ; that after *they* have faithfully
served

served thee in this World, *they* may hereafter be made *Partakers* of everlasting Happiness in thy Kingdom of Glory, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Children on Behalf of their Parents.

O Almighty God and most gracious Father, I humbly intreat thy Blessing on me. [* Pity the Weakness of my tender Age, and early assist me with thy Grace. O let me seriously remember thee my Creator in the Days of my Youth, that I may fear and serve thee, and carefully avoid the Devil and all his Works.] Make me, O Lord, humble and reverent, dutiful and obedient to my Parents; duly to regard, and truly to be thankful for their Advice, Counsel, and Instruction: Not to murmur and repine at their Rebukes and Admonitions; but patiently and prudently to behave under all their Resentments. So guide me by thy holy Spirit, that the older I grow in Years, the more I may encrease in Virtue, Piety, and Goodness, to my Parents Comfort, thy Honour and Glory, and my own everlasting Happiness.

I humbly beseech thee to bestow thy Blessing, Grace and Mercy on my Parents. Pardon their Infirmities, and forgive their former Iniquities; According to thy Mercy remember them, for thy Goodness Sake in Jesus Christ. Endue them

* This to be omitted, when Children are grown to Maturity.

with

with true Wisdom, and an abundant Measure of thy Grace. Let Goodness and Mercy be their Pleasure and Delight. Cast them not away in the Time of their old Age; forsake them not when their Strength fails them; but help and comfort them in all their Weakness. The longer they live, make them the more ready and prepared to die, and the better qualified to be with thyself in eternal Glory. Be thou, O God, their Protector in Life, and at Death their Comforter; and when all Things here shall fail them, be thou the Strength of their Hearts, and their Portion for evermore.

A Prayer for a married Man.

O Almighty God and merciful Father, who by thy Wisdom and Providence hast instituted and ordained the State of Marriage, for our Comfort and Happiness, and other wise Ends. O teach and enable me to behave prudently in this Station, and to love my Wife with a hearty sincere Affection; not to despise, or insult over her as an Inferior, nor yet to be bitter against her; but to bear with her Infirmities, mildly to use my Authority, and to treat her as my dear and loving Companion. Let me not rigidly oppose, but condescendingly comply with, all her reasonable Desires and Expectations. To this End, make me, O God, mild and patient, faithful and kind, respectful and tender to her; not easily provoked, or apt to entertain angry and unkind Resentments: But with Love and Condescension, Prudence and Discretion, let me endeavour

deavour to secure her Affection, that our Days may be easy and happy to each other.

Enable me, O Lord, conscientiously to discharge the solemn Vow and Promise, which I made on my entring into this State. O let me never wander after forbidden Pleasures, nor inordinately use those that are lawful; but grant, that all my Actions may be governed and directed by the Rules of Purity and Holiness, Justice and Sobriety, having ever in Remembrance the strict Account I must one Day give. Make me diligent and industrious; and so bless all my lawful Endeavours, that I may be enabled decently to provide for my Wife and Children, and not leave them destitute and exposed to Want, when I die.

I beseech thee, O God, to bestow an abundant Measure of thy Grace and Blessing on my dear Wife. Give her Length of Days, encrease in her Meekness and Humility, Love and Condescension, and all other divine Virtues; that she may be an Ornament to her Sex, and a real Comfort to me. Keep us from all Strife and Contention, all Peevishness and unreasonable Passions, Repining and Discontent. Grant, that no Mistake, or causeless Jealousy, may interrupt the Sincerity of our Affections; but let true Christian Love and Peace possess our Minds. Endue us with Purity of Heart, and a chaste Conversation. Give us such meek and gentle Dispositions, as that we may live together in mutual Love, studying to promote the Welfare and Happiness, the Support and Comfort of each other, and to be eminent Examples to all about us, of a holy and blameless

less Conversation. Unite us, O Lord, in one and the same Interest. Make us to bear each other's Burdens, and endeavour to encrease the Joys, and ease the Sorrows of one another. In all Changes and Alterations of Life, let us religiously preserve an immutable Love for, and Delight in each other.

Grant, O Lord, that we may strive to promote the Salvation of one another; that after we have enjoyed the Comfort and Satisfaction of a pleasing Conversation here on Earth, we may finally part in Peace, and rest in good Hope to meet again, never to part: But to live together in a perfect, happy, and eternal Friendship; even in that Fulness of Joy, which is in thy Presence, where are Pleasures durable and everlasting. This I beg for the Merits of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a married Woman.

O Almighty God! Thou art the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, who orderest and disposest all Things and Persons, as is most agreeable to infinite Wisdom. Sanctify to me, I humbly beseech thee, the State of Marriage, to which thou hast called me. Grant me Knowledge and Grace to behave myself in this and all other Relations, as becomes the Servant of Jesus Christ. I am sensible and fully persuaded, that all thy Laws are just and reasonable: And since thou hast commanded Wives to be in Subjection to their Husbands, O let me never oppose thy divine Will, but readily and chearfully submit to,
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and reverence him, whom thou art pleased to set over me. Make me to love, honour, and obey him, according to thy Command, and my own most solemn Promise. Let my Behaviour be such, as to engage his Affection; that he may delight in, and be pleased with me. On all Occasions of Offence, let me quench the Flames of Anger with Silence, or soft obliging Words, and thereby preserve Peace. O give me the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit. Make me humble and modest, discreet and considerate, careful and diligent, faithful and constant, mild and patient; and not only to remember the Duties and Comforts, but also the Temptations and Crosses of a married State, whether prosperous or adverse.

Deliver me, O God, from all Pride and Vanity, Affectation and Self-Conceit. Suffer me not, I beseech thee, to employ my Thoughts and Study, how to adorn a corruptible Body, and at the same Time neglect the Improvement of my Mind; but grant, that I may endeavour to adorn my Soul with heavenly Grace, and good Dispositions, which are in thy Sight, far more beautiful, than any outward Dress and Gaiety. Let my Thoughts and Desires be chaste and pure, all my Actions and Behaviour so harmless and inoffensive, as not to be tarnished with the least Appearance of Evil.

Bless, O Lord, my dear Partner, with the best of thy Blessings. Enable me faithfully to discharge the Duties of a Wife, and to make his Life easy and comfortable, by a kind obliging Conduct towards him, and by complying with all his just and reasonable Desires. O do
thou

thou keep him under thy Protection; bless him with Health and Length of Days, and bring him to thy heavenly Kingdom. Make us faithful to thee, and to each other; and as we are of one Flesh, so let us be of one Heart and Soul, that nothing but Death may ever separate us. Grant us, O God, to live in Love, Peace, and Unity; and after this short Life is ended, O may we meet again in thy Kingdom of Glory, there mutually to admire, praise, and glorify thee our heavenly Father to an Eternity of Ages. This I beg thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a Master, or Mistress of a Family.

O Most high God, the Lord and Governor of all Men; who in thy holy Word hast taught both Masters and Servants how to demean themselves. Make me, I beseech thee, a kind and gentle Master [Mistress] to those who are in Subjection to me; having ever in Remembrance, that I also have a Master in Heaven. Let me never be so wicked, as to encourage my Servants in cheating, lying, or any base unworthy Action; but give me a tender Concern for their Souls and Bodies. Assist me, O God, with thy Grace, so to countenance the Pious, reprove the Vicious, and to be an Example of all Good, that I and my whole Family may faithfully serve thee, and constantly do such Things, as are laudable and praise-worthy. Let me not despise, or behave haughtily towards my Servants, but with Patience hear their Complaints, and give them what-

ever

ever is just and equal. Suffer me not to insult over them, nor to oppress, or defraud them of their Wages, and what is their Right; but let me act with Justice and Candour, Mercy and Kindness towards them. Give me, O Lord, an understanding Heart and prudent Conduct, that I may command nothing, but what is reasonable in itself, agreeable to thy Will, or tending to promote and advance thy Glory.

Let not any belonging to me be ever wanting in their Duty to thee; but keep and preserve them from Vice and Wickedness, Disorder and Danger, that my Family may be a Nursery of Virtue and Piety, of all that is exemplary and praise-worthy. Give me such a Zeal for thy Glory, and sincere Regard for the Salvation of others, that I may use my utmost Endeavours to promote Religion and Piety in all about me. Convince them and me, O Lord, how much it is both our Duty and Interest to serve thee; that we may duly offer up our united Prayers and Praises at the Throne of Grace, especially on the Days set apart for thy more immediate Worship and Service. O God, direct and enable every one of us faithfully to discharge our respective Duties, and diligently pursue the great Work, for which thou sentest us into this World. Keep us evermore in thy Fear and Love; protect and defend us from all Dangers; and at last bring us to thy heavenly Kingdom, thro *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

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A Prayer for a Servant.

O Lord God, the Maker of Rich and Poor, who disposest all Things in a wise and excellent Order; and by whose good Providence it is, that I am placed in the State and Condition of a Servant. I desire, with true Content and humble Thankfulness, to submit to thy Will herein, since my blessed Redeemer, who is Lord of all, condescended to take upon him the Form of a Servant, that he might save the Souls of all Men.

Endue me, O Lord, with a right Knowledge of my Duty, and according to thy Command, let me esteem those I serve, worthy of all Honour. Make me careful to please them in all Things, never contradicting nor purloining, but shewing all good Fidelity; and serving them faithfully as to the Lord, and not to Men. Help me so humbly to demean myself, and so sincerely to perform my Duty, that I may obtain their Favour. Or, if they are cross and difficult to please, preserve me, O God, from all indecent disrespectful Behaviour; remembering that I serve the Lord *Christ*, from whom I expect my Reward. For if my Heart is right with thee, my God, and I am careful to obey thy Commands; tho' now abased, I shall in due Time be exalted. O my supreme Lord, let it be more my Concern, faithfully to discharge my Duty in this low Station, than how to change it for my Ease, Profit, or Honour. O let me not be the Servant of Sin, but enjoy the blessed Liberty with which *Christ* has made me free; the Liberty to avoid Sin, and to run the Way of thy Commandments. O

O Lord, assist me with thy Grace, that I may perform the Duties thou requirest of me, to the Glory of thy holy Name, the Pleasure and Welfare of those I serve, and to my own true Advantage and Comfort. Make me, O God, just and honest, true and faithful, diligent and industrious, humble and obedient, meek and patient; doing my Duty not with Eye-Service, as a Man-Pleaser, but in Singleness of Heart fearing God. O let me not be rude and unmannerly, or stir up Wrath, by answering again; but make me ready to bear Reproof, to be silent, submissive, and peaceable; as one that desires to be found faithful in thy Sight, O God, who seest in secret, and searchest the Heart, but will reward openly. Keep me, I beseech thee, from Pride, Discontent, and Murmuring; and enable me to live in brotherly Affection and Unity with my Fellow Servants. Make me, O Lord, to remember I am ever in thy Sight, and that both my temporal and eternal Interest depend on the faithful and conscientious Performance of my Duty, that so I may not be seduced or discouraged by any Temptation; but having a due Regard to the Recompence of Reward, I may run with Patience the Race that is set before me. And whose Servant soever I am on Earth, grant, O God, that I may hereafter be found in the Number of thy faithful Servants. O let me be such, as that thou mayst then mercifully accept of me, and my Services, for the Sake of thy beloved Son, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer.

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The Widow's Prayer.

O Most gracious and merciful Lord God, who in the Midst of Judgment rememberest Mercy; in much Pity and Compassion regard the desolate and sorrowful Condition of thy Servant. Thou hast taken from me the Friend of my Bosom, my dear Companion and Guide, in this State of Pilgrimage; and thereby taught me to know the Value of that Blessing, which I either slighted, or was not duly thankful for. I humbly submit to thy just, but heavy Hand. Comfort and Support me in this Dejection of Heart, and great Perplexity of Mind. O let this severe Instance of Providence bring me nearer to thyself, in holy Love, devout Affection, and a lively Hope, that thou wilt never leave nor forsake me. Take not away thy loving Kindness from me in Displeasure, but vouchsafe to continue thy Favour towards me. Assist and enable me to bear this Affliction with an humble, meek, and patient Spirit.

Moderate my Passions, free me from all discontented and distrustful Thoughts; help me to rely on thee, who providest for the Widows and Fatherless. O thou, who hast a peculiar Care, and tender Regard for Widows, be pleased to espouse my Cause, to raise me up Friends, and direct me in all my Affairs, that I may rightly discharge every Duty incumbent on me.

[*Bless and preserve my Children, and make me careful to educate them in Virtue and Reli-

* *This only to be used when there are Children.*

gion,

gion; that they may be happy in this Life and the next. Give me Wisdom prudently to instruct and govern them; endue me with Love and tender Affection towards them, that they may be a Comfort to me. Let thy good Providence be their Support, thy Spirit their Guide and Counsellor.]

Prepare me, O God, for every Condition of Life, that neither Prosperity nor Adversity, Health or Sickneſs, may ever make me to forget thee, my God: But be thou the Support of my Life, and Relief of my Soul, under every Trouble and Affliction. O bring me ſafe thro' this Vale of Sin and Miſery, to thy bleſſed Kingdom of Glory, for the Sake of thy beloved Son, my only Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.*

A Prayer for an Orphan.

O LORD my God, the Father of the Fatherleſs. Since thou art pleaſed in thy Providence to deprive me of my earthly Parents, I humbly beſeech thee, to be a moſt merciful and gracious Father to me. My whole Hope is in thy Goodneſs and Compaſſion; O leave me not deſolate, expoſed to the Wants and Dangers of this miſerable World, but be thou a moſt gracious Father to adviſe, ſupport, and provide for me. Be pleaſed, O God, to direct all my Deſigns agreeably to thy Holy Will. Make me diligent and induſtrious in ſome honeſt Buſineſs or Calling. Bleſs and proſper me therein, that I may have Cauſe to praiſe thee, for my Succeſs. Raiſe me up faithful Friends to counſel and admoniſh me, that I may be properly educated,

and fully instructed, in the Knowledge of thy true Religion, and give me Grace to practise the same.

I beg leave, O Lord, to recommend myself to thy Care and Protection. Be thou my God and Father, Director and Preserver. Watch over me for Good. Lead and conduct me thro' all the various and intricate Affairs of this Life. Preserve me from all Distrust of thy good Providence. Whatever my State and Condition may be here, give me Grace to live so piously, just, and soberly, that I may obtain an incorruptible Inheritance, which fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for thy Servants. Grant this, O merciful Father, for thy dear Son's Sake our blessed Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Morning or Evening.

O Most merciful and gracious God, infinite in Power, Goodness, and Truth ; righteous in all thy Ways, and holy in all thy Works. Thou didst create us a most excellent and noble Being, but we have since greatly debased and corrupted ourselves by Sin. We confess, O Lord, that we have been led captive by our sinful Lusts and Passions, to our own Destruction. We have offended thee in Thought, Word, and Deed ; and our Sins have rendered us exceeding vile in thy Sight. We lament and abhor the Ingratitude and Rebellion of our Lives. We humble and abase ourselves before thee. O Lord, have Mercy upon us, miserable Offenders ; and for the Sake of the meritorious Sufferings of thy dear
Son,

Son, pardon and forgive all our past Sins. Give us unfeigned Repentance, and an humble Sense of our Vileness and great Wickedness; and make us, we pray thee, very careful and solicitous, to recover the Dignity and Honour of our Nature, and to resemble thee in Righteousness and true Holiness.

Give us Grace to live virtuous and religious Lives. Sanctify our Natures; make us to delight in thy Law, and to behave with Wisdom and Prudence. Grant us so to love and keep thy Commandments, as that we may constantly enjoy the Pleasure and Happiness of a good Conscience. Let us never be given up to any vile Affections or worldly Lusts, but preserve us we beseech thee, by the Power of thy Grace, from all Sin and Wickedness. Afford us a great Measure of Patience during our Abode here, where Man is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards. Wean us from this vain World, in which there is no perfect Happiness to be found; and fix our Hearts on the eternal Glory and Felicity of Heaven. Let the Consideration, that our Time on Earth is but of short Continuance, make us very indifferent about our present Condition; and so enable us to bear all the Evils of this Life, that our light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, may procure us an eternal Weight of Glory. Let us always have such a lively Sense of thy continual Presence with us, as that we may dread to offend thee. Let a firm Belief of future Rewards animate and encourage us to despise all Difficulties and Dangers, and to persevere with Patience in the conscientious Discharge of our Duty.

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☞ We also humbly interceed with thee for all Mankind. Bless all Nations with the Light of thy glorious Gospel; and let those who enjoy it, live agreeably to the Precepts thereof. In particular we implore Mercy and Favour for these Kingdoms. As thou hast graciously established among us thy true and pure Religion, we pray thee to preserve and defend it from all its Enemies. Give us Grace not only to profess, but to practice it. Bless those whom thou hast set over us in Church and State, more especially our gracious Sovereign. Give him great Wisdom and Zeal to promote thy Glory, and crown his Endeavours with Success. Prosper him with all Happiness, both in this Life and the next. Bless our Relations, Friends, and Benefactors. Pity, relieve, and comfort the sick and weak, the needy and necessitous, and all who are any ways afflicted. Make us to love them that hate us, to forgive those who injure us, and to return Good for Evil.

We laud and praise thee, O most gracious and merciful God, for thy infinite Love and Goodness to us, and all thy Creatures. It is by thee only, that we live, move, and have our Being. Love and Goodness first moved thee to create us, and ever since inclines thee to direct, govern, and preserve us. Whatever tends to support and comfort our frail Natures, is derived from thy infinite and eternal Love. We praise thee for every Instance of thy Grace and Loving-kindness. But we more especially bless, adore, and magnify thee, for thy wonderful and amazing Love in the Redemption of the World, by our
Lord

Lord *Jesus Christ*. O let this stupendous Love of thine encrease our Love to thee, and may it awaken us to a serious Concern for our everlasting Salvation. Let us not foolishly neglect or despise the Joys of Heaven; but help us to make it our earnest Endeavours to obtain that Salvation, which our Saviour purchased at the Expence of his own most precious Blood. We humbly commit ourselves to thy Care and Protection this Day. (Night.) Preserve us from Sin and all evil Accidents. Bless all our just Undertakings, prosper our honest Designs, and afford us all Things necessary for our Support and Subsistence.

O God, mercifully pity our Infirmities, pardon our Defects, accept our imperfect Services, and thro' the Mediation of thy dear Son, give us Life everlasting. O that we may rise to an immortal Life of Glory, in the Day when he shall come with his holy Angels, to judge both quick and dead. All this we beg for the Sake and Merits of *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen*.

N.B. *This Prayer may be used by a single Person, only changing the Number.*

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